The Dissertation Committee for Alice Marie Shukalo certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Communing with the Gods:

Bodybuilding, Masculinity, and U.S. Imperialism, 1875-1900

Committee:

_____

Janet M. Davis, Supervisor

_____

Desley Deacon

_____

T. Walter Herbert

_____

Jeffrey Meikle

_____

William Stott

_____

Jan Todd

Communing with the Gods:

Bodybuilding, Masculinity, and U.S. Imperialism, 1875-1900

by

Alice Marie Shukalo, B.A., M.A.

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To my daughter, Alicia

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Communing With the Gods:

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During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the United States re-envisioned its identity according to new popular conceptions of expansionism and strength. As the image of a larger, more powerful United States developed, parallel developments in other cultural arenas reinforced this impetus. Professional sports, college athletics, anthropological disciplines, medicine,

historiography, military organizations, immigration, a messianic sense of the nation's mission, and the mass media were constituting their own arguments for U.S. entitlement to unrestricted growth. These discourses located the apotheosis of civilization on a specific cultural point: the white male body. *Communing with the Gods* argues that the powerful, physically assertive white male body became a metaphor that stood for national identity and military might and helped to direct the course of U.S. international policy.

The dissertation focuses on images of male bodies in the illustrated periodical press when visually explicit physical fitness became the new standard for white masculinity. It addresses emergent obsessions with gender, physical vitality, competition, athletics, strength training, and bodybuilding as well as how images of white male muscularity impressed on public consciousness the various discourses of worldwide "Anglo-Saxon" supremacy. It discusses the role of the popular press in distributing nationalistic imperatives via sports coverage, images of muscular white men, and illustrations of military display and weaponry. The dissertation contributes to discussions of the power of visual metaphor in the transmission of culture, of national and global gender politics, of United States history and in particular to forces which impelled the course of international relations, and to the interplay of image-making and ideology. Other studies have focused on verbal communication, gender politics, and

national policies with respect to relations with various peoples. *Communing with the Gods* examines visual rhetoric of the physically powerful white male as it directed and responded to historical events in the late nineteenth century. Because the power of images to reinforce gender and racial identities reaches so deeply into the psyche, metaphors of hegemonic masculinity were crucial to the construction of international policy and to the rise of the United States as an international force and eventually as a world power.

Contents

Introduction

In 1890, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan published *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, a book whose effect on national support of expansionist policies and of a fleet of battleships and cruisers that could master the globe was enormous. The book comprises his lectures from the late 1880s at the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, where he taught after a career in the Navy. In *Sea Power*, Mahan analyzes European expansion in light of commercial and military power, always relating the course of events to the power of the navies, always returning to the bedrock of his mission: it is time for the United States to "found, support, and increase" its sea power.[1] The book, with the assistance of his articles in popular magazines, was instrumental in convincing the public and men in top positions in government that overseas expansion was necessary to national survival. Mahan, whose career in the Navy is described best as lackluster, turned out to be the author of some of the most influential arguments of the nineteenth century for U.S. commercial and military expansion. *The Influence of Sea Power* proved to be a publisher's dream, reaching its fourteenth edition by 1898. The book was an expansionist's dream as well; its effect on political leaders led to funding and publicity for a navy whose power ultimately

was fit for competition with the best navies of Europe. The publication of *Sea Power* could not have been timed better for winning converts to Mahan's vision.

Mahan's conception of the nation as subject to continual growth or inevitable recession reiterated the theme of expansionism that had gained credence over the past several decades. The motif of expansion was extraordinarily versatile, adaptable to such unlike realms as biological survival, international relations, civil engineering, and physical fitness. In the 1880s, individuals interested in a powerful Navy had convinced Congress to authorize construction of more than thirty new ships, most of them cruisers. With the election of expansionist Benjamin Harrison to the presidency in 1888 and his appointment of Benjamin Tracy as Secretary of the Navy, this emphasis shifted. In 1889, Tracy proposed to Congress an increase of twenty battleships. In the 1890s, even after the financial collapse of 1893, Congress appropriated more funds for a navy that could wage war as well as defend the nation.[2]

The subject of this study is expansionism as it was expressed in several cultural realms during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Growing interest in physical fitness, consolidation of mass media and advances in printing technology, massive immigration from Europe to the United States,

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[1] Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (1890. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1898), 89.

industrialization and its consequent outpouring of agricultural and manufactured goods, and renewed competition for empire among European powers converged to produce new cultural forms and mentalities. After the Civil War, when territorial expansion appeared to be quiescent, new social and political factors kept alive the impulse to expand. Numerous and unanticipated changes in the direction of life in the United States, addressed below, challenged the vision of Anglo-Saxon men governing the nation, with everyone in place in good order, prosperity measured out according to one's due. With activists lobbying for greater rights for women, African American men voting and holding political office, and huge numbers of immigrants from Europe, the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon man looked to be in jeopardy. In addition, a discourse of concern appeared in the popular press about the mental, moral, and physical fortitude of this population. Along with the fears for the continued dominance of the older order arose a redefinition of manliness.

This dissertation focuses on the interplay among ideologies and power struggles concerning gender and race in the discourses of athletics, national military power, and imperialism. In the second half of the nineteenth century, popular interest in physical culture and athletics increased tremendously. Interest in professional and college sports grew and created a market for a new

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[2] Mark Russell Shulman, *Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893* (Annapolis,

industry in fitness regimens, athletic clubs, fitness instruction, and physical culture journalism and books. Publishers began to include more, larger, and more realistic images of sports contests, often featuring individual athletes as celebrities. The new standards for manliness were amply represented in the illustrated press; whether the publication was a sports-and-scandal tabloid or an arts-and-literature monthly aimed at the upper middle-class family, editors found ways to represent the white male body. By the 1880s, subscribers to *Scribner's Magazine*, for example, could find in its pages articles by Dudley Allen Sargent explaining in detail the effects of different sports on the young white male body, complete with illustrations of the current crop of college men. At the same time, historians and politicians were writing treatises about the evolution of human history, power, and migration and linking those narratives to theories of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and military might. Those writers were calling for extension of democracy and capitalism via the expansion of U.S. influence over the globe. Supporting these polices of international influence were the arguments for the development of an invincible navy. Theses cultural movements all were headed in the same direction: assuring the continued hegemony of the white male in U.S. culture and beyond. Despite their disparate subjects—athletic white male bodies, assertion of power overseas, and the

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MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 128, 138.

buildup of the navy—they all focus on a single goal, that of white male dominance. Their proponents used the metaphors of manliness and male strength whether they were discussing men's bodies, foreign policy, or battleships.

These cultural expressions, occurring simultaneously and addressing similar concerns, bear close analysis for the insight they offer into the relationship between gender formation and the largest international policies. In fact, foreign policy and naval power were frequently discussed in terms of white male power, as Kristin L. Hoganson points out in *Fighting for American Manhood*.[3] Because of the growing presence of the illustrated press, much of this discussion took place with the assistance of illustrations of types of masculinist power. Although I am interested in the verbal rhetoric of male dominance, I am concerned also with the presentation of manliness via images and how those images became a cultural pedagogy for gender instruction and hierarchies at this period. As Gail Bederman, E. Anthony Rotundo, Michael Kimmel, and other historians of gender have argued, in the nineteenth century, manliness changed from being defined as a constellation of qualities that men expressed through

[3] Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

temperament and behavior.[4] Instead, manliness came to be defined, in addition to those qualities, as the capacity to be powerful, to be self-assertive and successful in competition with other men, and to be physically strong and willing to engage in combat. Manliness evolved into a requirement that the traditional traits remain, but with physical evidence of virility added to them. Several models of manliness and of its visual representation competed during this time: never was there just one model. However, a certain type gained hegemony in the illustrated periodical press and received the most publicity: the symmetrically developed, well muscled, athletic white male. Manliness became a form of self-representation that required a convincing display of inner resources of combativeness and physical evidence of muscular power and athleticism. At the end of the century, manliness was even acquiring a new name: masculinity. Bederman analyzes the tension between this new standard for physical toughness and the need to see white men as the most civilized group, those who could, it was argued, best govern the world. Hoganson argues furthermore that anxiety about this more rigorous definition led to

[4] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

conceptualizations of international relations in terms of manliness, which provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars.

The image of the muscular white male became common fare for the reader of mass publications, appearing in forms that by the end of the century moved beyond illustration of exercise techniques and principles and into the area of display of muscular males strictly for their aesthetic and erotic value. This was true for general interest family magazines as well as for publications that had a reputation for salacious stories and pictures. *The Cosmopolitan*, which was planned originally in 1886 as a family magazine whose editors then turned it into a more literary monthly, ran an article by strongman, body builder, and exhibitionist Eugen Sandow in 1894 that featured seven full-body photographic reproductions of him posing as classical statues, dressed in a fig leaf and a pair of sandals. This type of hypermuscular body, I argue, became a metaphor for the inculcation of the new form of manliness, which was contingent on physical impressiveness. It was also a powerful metaphor, no less potent for the ways in which it worked on the unconscious, for U.S. military power and for the self-image and the public image, it was hoped by some, of the United States in the international arena. I concur with Hoganson's thesis that desperation to prove manliness lay at the foundation of the belligerent and self-congratulatory rhetoric of the debates about and press coverage of the Spanish-American War.

Although I use many written texts to explore this connection, my major interest is in a particular form of visual and material culture: the image of the muscular, athletic, white male in the illustrated periodical press. I argue that the continual and widespread pervasion of this image throughout popular culture functioned as a visual metaphor for white male supremacy. Furthermore, I argue that the metaphor of white male invincibility constituted a pedagogy of social and political order that extended its reach from domestic politics into the areas of national identity, international relations, and overseas imperialism. In addition, I argue that this metaphor became a symbol of the nation, its military power, and its role in world politics. In short, it became another version of the "American flag." My interest lies in unpacking a small part of the question of "how" gender discourses make their mark on us, in examining some of the visual technologies they use, and in discussing how those discourses shape such enormous, far-reaching practices as international policies and their effects on millions of other peoples. I am concerned in this study with the one of the visual means by which this desperation about "manliness" was both nurtured and fought in the periodical press and with the images for manhood that established hegemony in the culture and in the psyches of such persuasive public figures as John Fiske, Josiah Strong, and Theodore Roosevelt.

The notion of expansion as the defining metaphor for the United States was hardly new. From the time of the earliest European colonies in the Americas, expansionism had characterized the worldviews and the sense of entitlement of European immigrants and their descendants. During the first half of the nineteenth century the United States acquired territories from England, France, Mexico, and Spain. Thomas Jefferson had engineered the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and wasted no time in sending army officers and explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark across the continent to find their way to the Pacific Ocean. From then until the war with Mexico (1846-48) that resulted in the acquisition of the huge territory west of Texas and south of the Oregon Country and then the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, the United States pursued geographic growth. After the Civil War, despite overwhelming internal issues to resolve, there were always men in government that nurtured the U.S. interest in exerting a presence overseas. In 1867, for example, Secretary of State William Seward annexed the Midway Islands and made a treaty with Russia for the purchase of Alaska. After that, presidents, secretaries of state and other cabinet members, and various members of Congress were always working, however quietly, to advance U.S. interests and influence overseas.

During this time, immigration to the United States and westward emigration from the East Coast had helped to reinforce and to realize national

goals of expansionism. The U.S. territory expanded to the Pacific by mid-century, but early pioneers were already there. The belief in what was assumed by its adherents to be a foreordained plan, which John O'Sullivan termed "Manifest Destiny," in 1845, had infused European settlement from its initiation in North America. Popular conviction of divine design, faith in the rhetoric of democracy, and realization of the burgeoning population in the U.S. had given this philosophy a momentum that seemed to have taken on a life of its own. Moreover, the United States had expanded in ways that took full advantage of the geographic growth. Railroads, communications technology, industrial and agricultural improvements, and massive immigrations from Europe as well as the Civil War and the emancipation of African Americans transformed the U.S. These changes spawned vast accumulations of corporate wealth, growth of cities beyond their means to accommodate masses of new residents, and industrialization on a huge scale. These in turn created a revolution in social stratification and occupations that resulted in a chasm between a new kind of working class and a largely "white collar" professional and clerical middle class. The plethora of consumer goods, the creation of mass media that reached across the continent in record times, and the changes in demographics and class structure that occurred after the Civil War led to anxieties about the outcome of

change and conservation. Stability and deliberation seemed to be modes of living that were slipping away.

Theories of evolution that surfaced in popular discourse after mid-century added to force to the cultural disturbance. Darwin's publication of his research in natural history gave to the debates about society the authentication of the conceptual models, vocabulary, and empiricism of science. Theorists of society, historians, ministers, journalists, politicians, and scientists in other areas of research took up, and often, transmogrified his ideas about organic evolution as explained in *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). Herbert Spencer's application of the idea of evolutionary progress to all phenomena, including the fields of ethics and psychology, in his *Synthetic Philosophy* (published between 1855 and 1896) appealed to the general public. His ideas provided the conceptual basis for myriad arguments in the U.S. for racism, sexism, discriminatory legislation and policies, ruthless measures of financial aggrandizement, and commercial and military expansion overseas.

The idea of expansionism exerted influence over the imagination in other, more personal, ways as well as over fantasies about national destiny. Expansion as a way to accommodate rapid social and technological changes was adapted easily to the emerging enthusiasm for physical fitness and muscular strength. Being physically bigger, with its corollary of assertive behavior in determining

one's own destiny, was especially attractive to men. Men who labored with their bodies found affirmation from other men as a result of physical strength and fighting. Men who had office jobs, whether in a clerical, administrative, scholarly, political, or corporate management capacity, took up exercise as a way to compensate for their sedentary occupations that drained their physical capacities to compete professionally and in terms of their "manliness." Writers about physical fitness, many of them practitioners as well as advocates, advised strenuous exercise for reasons of physical appearance as well as for health.

The antebellum philosophies that had promised that human perfection was possible had addressed the realm of the body as well as the mind and spirit. Interest in the relation of body to spirituality, of physiology to mental growth, and of exercise to the development of the whole human being had fostered a widespread interest in calisthenics[5] and gymnastics, brought to the U.S. by German and Scandinavian immigrants. About mid-century, such fitness advocates as George Barker Windship, a medical doctor, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, writer, abolitionist, social activist, Unitarian minister, and soldier, promoted exercise and strength training. Windship began a consistent regimen of gymnastics while he was an undergraduate at Harvard as a result of being insulted by an older student and being too small to retaliate. He became

[5] "Calisthenics" comes from the Greek term for "beautiful strength."

interested in weightlifting and devoted much of his time ever after to increasing his strength, earning the unofficial title of the "American Samson." Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., another doctor, excoriated the depths to which young men had sunk in terms of physical presentation, describing them as a new low in soft muscles and pallid faces. Books about exercise and strength development addressed the topic of symmetry and the appearance of a muscular body, including illustrations that showed readers various techniques. In so doing, the books represented strong, impressive bodies as models, contributing to a new visual aesthetic in the process. Furthermore, the collection of statistics about the men in the Union Army that the U.S. Sanitary Commission had collected during the Civil War focused another kind of attention on the male body, classifying it by race, ethnicity, region, occupation, age, and physical measurements of various areas and parts.

In addition to these influences, British and Irish immigrants brought with them a love of games and sports. Slowly but steadily, sports became a part of mainstream culture. Men from all strata became fans of horseracing, rowing, sailing, and blood sports. Boxing, which had strong support from the upper classes in England, came to the U.S. early in the nineteenth century. Although it did not receive the backing that it had enjoyed in England, it was a permanent part of working-class men's culture, especially among the English and the Irish.

Prizefighting, an outlaw practice for most of the nineteenth century, drew fans from all classes and made fortunes for backers and for some of the fighters. The best fighters became celebrities, admired for their grit, strength, athleticism, ability to control a fight, and appearance. Some young men in colleges and universities played sports, even if those sports had to be extracurricular. A few universities, however, joined the movement towards athletics and sponsored rowing teams in the 1860s. Soon after, soccer-football and then rugby-football became an increasingly prominent part of college life after the game between Princeton and Rutgers in 1869, which Rutgers won. Track and field events attracted many other students, and wrestling, still others. When Dudley Allen Sargent, medical doctor and physical education instructor, accepted a position in 1879 as physical education instructor and director of the Hemenway Gymnasium at Harvard University, a new level of scientific monitoring of the male body became institutionalized as part of university life.

Sargent had been interested in the effects of various kinds of exercise on specific muscles since he had been an undergraduate and taught at Bowdoin College. Adopting the anthropometric techniques that the Sanitary Commission had used in the Civil War, Sargent charted the bodies of college men at Bowdoin, Yale, and Harvard in order to ascertain the "average" body and to inform his charges how their measurements and strength-tests compared with those of

other young men. He charted the bodies of the women at Radcliffe, also, thus giving all students the chance to correct their bodies through appropriate exercise. His influence was not limited to the Ivy League, however. Through his authority as a medical doctor, his prestige as a Harvard professor, and his access to the press, his celebration of statistics and his theories of strength training and the symmetrical muscular development of the entire body had a wide audience. His ideas were published in history books, academic journals, and special-interest books as well as in popular magazines. Interest in bodies and their measurements was so great that at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, two life-size anthropometric statues were displayed at the Anthropology Building. These statues, representing the typical college male and female, were based on Sargent's statistics and on three photographs of each entering student at Harvard and at Radcliffe. (The students were photographed without clothing; some of the photographs were displayed in the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building.) Thus was equality between genders promoted at the fair. Both men and women could have themselves measured in the physical anthropology laboratory and see how they fared in relation to the typical college student, an experience that no doubt led to satisfaction for some and to anxiety for others.[6]

[6] Julie K. Brown, *Contesting Images: Photography and the World's Columbian Exposition* (Tucson and

I have found that the concept of gender as a way to understand culture is most useful when it is given an encompassing definition. Gender can be defined as a system of power that goes beyond the establishment and conservation of differences and social power-relations that are based on sexual anatomy only. The concept can apply as well to thinking about the possession (or lack thereof) of power in culture generally. If we use the term "gender" as a term for cultural power situation among populations regardless of sex, then it can be employed to discuss ways in which power is enacted *within* the designations "women" and "men" as well as between historical constitutions of class, ethnicity, and race. In this dissertation, I use the term "gender" to mean the placement of any person or group in relation to another person or group according to empowerment in relation. In other words, when we use the term "gender" to mean relations of domination and subordination, or power and deference, regardless of "male" or "female," then the term may be used as a way to describe disparities in power in any number and kind of social relations. "Gender," here, refers to the power-position of *anyone* in relation to someone or something else. As such, one's gendered situation is also always dynamic, changing with each relation and context.

London: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 45.

The term "bodybuilding" has a larger sense in this dissertation, as well. Conventionally, the term refers to the practice of focused and intensive muscle-building and fat elimination to achieve a specific appearance for the purpose of competition. In this sense, the term has a highly specialized use. I use "bodybuilding" to mean, literally, the interest in and practice of building the body by any form of exercise done at any level of exertion and fitness. This applies to all forms of athletics, sports, exercise, and calisthenics and is used with respect to any concern with increasing the fitness, health, size, and strength of the human body. In this sense, anyone who exercises is a bodybuilder. As a metaphor, bodybuilding can be applied to interest in "bigness" whether is manifested in bodies, machines, or ships. In fact, the fascination with machines cannot be emphasized too strongly in the evolution of white masculinity.

Material culture and technology provided provocative counterpoint to the struggles of African-Americans, laborers, and white women: science and mechanical marvels created a world apart from and much more seductive than the world of gritty wage-earning and civil rights struggles. The Corliss Engine at the Philadelphia Centennial had enthralled viewers with its mechanical magic and with its awe-inspiring size. The 1870s nurtured the blossoming of gigantism, both in physical structures and financial fortunes. Such figures as Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Jay Gould, and John Pierpont

Morgan established themselves during this period, their successes all but making the fiction of Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick* into fact. Technology and engineering had presented opportunities to create projects that promised to change the world for the better. Tunnels, bridges, gigantic pumps and urban sewage systems were featured in the press as if they were additions to the Seven Wonders of the World. Moreover, the gung-ho attitude towards more and faster mechanization altered the world of communication as well. These advances aided the creation of an advertising industry that marketed mass-produced goods and helped to keep the economy growing and also meant that newspapers could be in consumers' hands soon after events occurred.

A number of studies about the history of men, manhood, and masculinity have provided a wealth of theories and histories on those subjects, placing men within the purview of gender and explicating the construction of forms of male identity as historically produced.[7] Scholars of gender have studied the cultural arenas of sports and the media as well as the representation of male bodies and

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[7] See, for example, R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Ronald P. Byars, *The Making of the Self-made Man: the Development of Masculine Roles and Images in Antebellum America* , PhD diss.,. (University of Michigan, 1979, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1908); Arthur Brittan, *Masculinity and Power* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood*; J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987); Michael Kimmel, "Consuming Manhood: The Feminization of American Culture and the Recreation of the Male Body, 1832-1920, *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28(1), Winter 1994: 7-36; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*;

masculinity in film.[8] Men, gender, and homoeroticism, men and violence, and men in the military have received serious recent study as well.[9] It can be difficult to separate these studies thematically, because a great many of them draw connections among the many forms that masculine production takes in our culture. For example, a given work may well address men, gender, homoeroticism, violence, and the military. Some scholars take as their subject the study of images that represent the nexus of gender, state, and institutional

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and Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen, *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[8] For discussions of sports, men, and power, see Michael Messner and Donald Sabo, *Sport, Men, and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books, 1990); Michael Messner, *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Patricia Vertinsky, "The Social Construction of the Gendered Body: Exercise and the Exercise of Power," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 11(2), Aug. 1994, 147-71; Roberta J. Park, "Healthy, Moral and Strong: Educational Views of Exercise and Athletics in Nineteenth Century America," Ed. Kathryn Grover, *Fitness in American Culture*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989); and Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics, and the Formation of a 'Man of Character': 1830-1900," in Mangan and Walvin. *Manliness and Morality*.

For discussions about film and the representation of gender, see Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood* Cinema (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre, and the Action Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

[9] On homoeroticism, see George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994) and John Donald Wrathall, "American Manhood and the Y.M.C.A., 1868-1920," Diss. (University of Minnesota, 1994).

On violence and masculinity, see T. Walter Herbert, *Sexual Violence and American Manhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); John Archer, ed., *Male Violence* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), and Ian Craib, "Masculinity and Male Dominance," *The Sociological Review* 35(4), November 1987, 721-743.

The identification between masculinity and military service are analyzed in Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: the Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: Free Press, and London: Collier Macmillan, 1987); Donald J. Mrozek, "The habit of victory: the American military and the cult of manliness," Mangan and Walvin, 20-239; Mark E. Kann, *On the Man Question: Gender and Civic Virtue in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*

politics. Another field within gender studies addresses to the production and function of fine art.[10] Semiotic studies of gender in popular media offer analyses of gender representations in television and advertising.[11] Finally, recent studies of race question the concept of racial categories as static divisions of peoples, arguing that all considerations of race are historically made and change according to dominant interests at any given time.[12]

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Paul R. Higate, ed., *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003).

[10]On gender and state politics, see John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1984); Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). See also Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997); J.A. Mangan, *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon: Aryan Fascism* (London and Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 1999) and Mangan, ed. *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon: Global Fascism* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000).

Useful analyses of gender and art history are Norman Bryson, "Gericault and Masculinity," *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretation*s, Ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, published by University Press of New England, 1994), Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997); and Joseph A. Kestner, "The Representation of Armour and the Construction of Masculinity in Victorian Painting," *Nineteenth Century Studies* 7 (1993): 1-28.

[11] Margaret Morse writes cogently about television, sports, and the male body in "Sport on Television: Replay and Display," *Regarding Television: Critical Approaches – An Anthology*. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983). Studies on the male body as represented in advertising imagery include the path-breaking work of Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); William Leiss, *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products, and Images of Well-Being* (Toronto: Methuen, 1986); Andrew Wernick, "From Voyeur to Narcissist: Imaging Men in Contemporary Advertising," *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change*, ed. Michael Kaufman (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* (New York: BasicBooks, 1988).

[12] For excellent analyses of definitions and practices of race, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, op. cit.; William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, "*Muerto por Unos Desconocidos* (Killed by Persons Unknown): Mob Violence against Blacks and Mexicans." *Beyond Black and White: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the U.S. South and Southwest.* Ed. Stephanie Cole and Alison M. Parker (College Station, TX: University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University Press, 2004); Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Suzanne Harper, "The Brotherhood: Race and Gender

I have looked at a variety of illustrated periodicals and books from between 1875 and 1900 to get a sense of the general landscape of verbal and visual rhetoric about the white male body. I selected three periodicals as being fairly representative of overtly gendered imagery; these three are targeted to differing audiences and therefore represent bodies in quite different ways. The periodicals are *The National Police Gazette, Harper's Weekly*, and *Scribner's Monthly/The Century* and *Scribner's Magazine.* (*Scribner's Monthly*, begun in 1870, ended in 1881 when it was sold because of the conflict between Scribner's book publishers and Scribner and Company, the magazine publishing entity. The book-publishing house objected to the magazine issuing books. The magazine's business manager bought most of the stock and the book publisher agreed not to start a new magazine within five years. The business manager, now the owner of the magazine, agreed to rename it, titling it *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine.* The former associate editor of *Scribner's Monthly* became the editor-in-chief of the *Century.* In 1887, Scribner's book publishers founded *Scribner's*

Ideologies in the White Supremacist Movement." PhD diss. (University of Texas at Austin, 1993); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); and Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Amy Kaplan, "Black and Blue on San Juan Hill," *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993; and Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-century America* (London: Verso, 1990).

Magazine, of the same genre as the *Century*. Because of the closeness of these publications, I have considered them to be a "family" and have used material from all of them.) I chose these periodicals because they published without interruption for the years 1875-1900 and their circulations were high enough to make reasonable an assumption that they reached a large portion of the population. All three were published in New York City, the center for publishing and mass media in the U.S. then and now, and all speak to elements of a white, urban population. Additionally, they were marketed to mass audiences and had nationwide circulation.

The *National Police Gazette* was a weekly sensationalistic tabloid of crime stories, burlesque and theater features, sex and violence stories, and promotion and news reporting of sports. Founded in 1845 as a crime reporter, after 1870 it focused increasingly on sports, particularly on the professional sports of boxing and wrestling. Richard Kyle Fox bought the paper in 1877 and served as its editor and publisher, steering it towards more sports coverage. By the early 1880s, it was the place to go for prizefight news. Its circulation rose to 150,000 in the late 1880s and stayed there through the 1890s. It was richly illustrated and featured as many imaginatively constructed pictures as it did images from "real life." Its audience was male, but I hesitate to define it by class because its subject matter was of interest to those interested in sports regardless of class. Although

it was not regarded by the mainstream as a publication that could be brought into the home and viewed by women and children, it was readily available at bars and saloons, barbershops, hotels, and by subscription (sent to the office, of course). Interest in sports was not predicated upon social status, profession, or economic position and the *Gazette* likely was read far more widely than its subscription list would have indicated. For a while, Anthony Comstock and the Society for the Suppression of Vice went after the paper, trying to get it shut down on the charge of using the U.S. mail to send pornography. Fox was convicted and had to pay a fine of five hundred dollars.[13] Fox, who had been made a millionaire by the *Gazette*, hardly cared. In 1887, Postmaster General William Vilas said that mailing the *Gazette* did not violate any existing statutes. In 1889, Josiah W. Leeds, a crusader against vice in Philadelphia, appealed to Postmaster General John Wanamaker, who referred the matter to the legal department of the Post Office. The head of this department said that because none of his predecessors had said that the *Gazette* was unmailable, he could not tell Wanamaker that it violated the law. He added that Comstock " 'has often

[13] Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1850-1854*. Vol. II. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 335.

applied to the U.S. district attorneys in New York to find indictments against the publication of said sheet, all of whom have believed that it was not indictable.'"[14]

Harper's Weekly was an illustrated general interest miscellany that was marketed to the middle-class household. Fletcher Harper of the Harper book-publishing house, who was a printer, a good businessman, and a good Methodist, founded *Harper's Weekly* in 1857. The *Weekly* emphasized news coverage, and it was advertised as a "'family magazine.'" It was known and admired for its illustrations and employed a number of artists who later were renowned. Designed as a vehicle for political discussion, the *Weekly* leavened its content with copious miscellany, and ran serial fiction as well.[15] According to N. W. Ayer, in 1882 the Weekly had a circulation of 120,000. In 1900, the endpoint of this study, it was at 80,000.[16] (Harper and Brothers book publishers experienced financial failure in 1899. In addition, the magazine had lost readers and advertisers because of its endorsements of Grover Cleveland for president.) I find *Harper's* useful in terms of analyzing the type of media input that a wide range of consumers would have experienced. It is not specialized or "low-brow," and neither is it targeted for the literature and art aficionado. Thomas

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[14] Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 150-151.
[15] Mott, *History of American Magazines,* Vol. II, 469-472.
[16] *N.W. Ayer and Sons American Newspaper Annual* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Sons, yearly from 1882).

Nast, the popular political cartoonist who invented the Republican elephant and popularized the donkey as the symbol of the Democrats, was a mainstay of *Harper's Weekly*. The magazine was known for its excellent illustrations. It is of especial import to this study because it published drawings and halftones of athletes and in the 1890s featured a regular amateur-sports column by Caspar Whitney, who reported also on the Spanish-American War. In addition, it published numerous richly illustrated stories about weaponry, the Navy's new battleships and cruisers, and the wars in Cuba, the Philippines, and the western United States.

Scribner's Monthly, founded in 1870 by Josiah G. Holland, Roswell Smith, and Charles Scribner, incorporated *Hours at Home*, a literary and religious monthly that Scribner's was already publishing. Holland, a poet and writer of moral essays, had tried a number of professions by the time he accepted the editorship.[17] Despite his background in moral-essay writing, the evangelical press criticized the new magazine for not being true to the faith.[18] From the start, *Scribner's Monthly* developed its illustrative capacities; pictures from woodcuts were consistently of the highest standard. In fact, *Scribner's* success was due largely to "the quality and quantity of its illustration."[19] The first issue ran 40,000

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[17] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, Vol. III, 457-58.
[18] Ibid., 463.
[19] Ibid., 466.

copies, and the monthly grew from there. The panic of 1873 caused no change in circulation and by 1880, circulation was above 100,000.[20] When it was sold in 1881 because of the dispute between Scribner's, book publishers, and Scribner and Company, magazine publishers and renamed *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, the editors changed the magazine's emphasis somewhat to show "a serious and intelligent regard for public affairs and problems."[21] The *Century* also ran copious retrospectives on the Civil War as well as serial novels, short stories, serial biographies, and illustrated series about the fine arts. Its circulation was highest at end of the 1880s, when it was over 200,000. By end of nineties, it was at 150,000.[22]

As had been agreed, Scribner's book publishers waited for five years and then founded *Scribner's Magazine* in 1887. By 1889 the new magazine had a circulation of 80,000 and by 1900, 175,000.[23] It focused on "popular topics with literary treatment." Aimed at the upper-middle class, it "bespoke modest but insistent 'quality'." Stanford White designed its cover as well as the cover for the *Century*.[24] *Scribner's Magazine* published first-person recollections of historical events, serial novels, poetry, and debates about such subjects as coastal defense

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[20] Ibid., 467.
[21] Ibid., 470.
[22] Ibid., 475.
[23] Ayer, *Newspaper Annual,* 1889-1900.
[24] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, Vol. IV, 718.

and Socialism. It covered fine arts, and it was known for its excellent illustrations.[25] Typical of its features were Mahan's "John Paul Jones" and Henry Cabot Lodge's "The Story of the Revolution," both published in 1898. (Lodge was writing about the revolution of the English colonies in North America, not the one going on in Cuba.) *Scribner's Magazine* featured articles about ocean travel, commerce, and the railroad as well as Jacob Riis's "How the Other Half Lives (1889) and "The Poor in Great Cities" (1892). Theodore Roosevelt published "Six Years of Civil Service Reform" in 1895 and, from January through June 1899, his six-part series about his experience as a Rough Rider in Cuba in the Spanish-American War. In 1898, the magazine averaged three articles in each issue about the war. Moreover, it featured accounts of travel in distant places, although those were of "pictorial and curious interest, rather than political and sociological."[26] By the end of the century, circulation was at 165,000.[27] Taken together and augmented by selections from several other popular magazines, these periodicals offer a range of topics, images, and styles of presentation that appealed to audiences that were distinguishable and yet overlapped. Thus these publications provide a look at a fairly broad spectrum of mass readership.

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[25] Ibid., 719.
[26] Ibid., 719-22.
[27] Ibid., 723.

Chapter one introduces the beliefs and practices relating to the body in the United States at mid-century. It offers a cultural backdrop for the emergence of athletics, team sports, and the exaltation of the image of the Anglo-Saxon male. I review a selection of periodicals in order to discuss the ways in which the male body was represented, both verbally and with images. I discuss as well the new scientific authorities for political and religious agendas of racism and sexism and the emergence of anthropometry and boxing as popular ways of thinking about and viewing the male body. The chapter ends with a brief overview of how colleges and universities were becoming a haven and a source of legitimacy for competitive sports.

Chapter two focuses on the period from the Civil War to the prizefight between Paddy Ryan and Joe Goss in 1880, an event that galvanized male interest in boxing and opened the way for a torrent of images of athletic white males. In this chapter I survey the literature and received wisdom about physical culture and the body and I discuss the incipient changes in the discourse about the body, including the emergence of a visual emphasis. The display of the male body as a template for "Every (Anglo-Saxon) Man" developed as a way to show how exercises should be done and what the visual goal was—how the viewer could look to others. The body, although still viewed as a temple that housed

virtue, health, and mental and moral vigor, was an increasingly muscular, well-proportioned structure.

In chapter three, I trace the course of the icon of the athletic white male into a context of incipient imperialism and popular demand for a navy that would look as if it could compete with European navies. This chapter considers images in the popular illustrated press in terms of how they drew from, corroborated, and compensated for anxieties about virility and dominance. Beginning with images of prizefighters, this chapter mines the periodicals under consideration for ways in which images of amateur athletes and college men were incorporated into the template of the working class body, with its visual power of intimidation and implication of instrumental power. Chapter three links federal policies and nationalistic rhetoric that pertained to subordinate populations to the burgeoning production of images of white male strength. The chapter closes with the representation of bodybuilder Eugen Sandow in the *National Police Gazette* as the new matrix for the white male body.

The fourth chapter concerns the apotheosis of white male physicality, an image I term the "imperial body." It functions as a pinup picture of the new image of white masculinity. This chapter addresses the increasing representation in the popular press of the white male body as an exemplar not only of fitness but also of military display and sexual desire. Florenz Ziegfeld's placement of

strongman and showpiece Eugen Sandow onto the U.S. celebrity circuit and the glut of photographs of him and of other spectacularly developed white men normalized and fed the popular demand for images of physically impressive masculinity. Sandow's presence at the World's Columbian Exposition prompted an intensified interest in new exercise regimens as well as more writing about the imperative to further the Anglo-Saxon forms of government, economy, and religion, i.e., democracy, capitalism, and Protestantism. Expansionists argued in the press that with the correct discipline and tutelage, other peoples could learn the practices of civic responsibility and self-control. Anti-expansionists argued back, but they were unequally matched against those who wanted more power overseas. In terms of physical culture, the decade of the imperial body produced the conditions—the interest in exaggerated strength and self-monitoring as well as the use of the halftone for illustrations—for the bodybuilding contests of the very early twentieth century which reiterated and reaffirmed the cultural salience of white male might. This body was interpreted and marketed as evidence that the white male was the apogee of the human form. Sandow's image, with its blond, Prussian looks and military bearing, honed to a fine point the dominant ethnic, racial, and sexual distinction of the imagery of supremacy. The value system and beliefs his body represented found voice in the most vocal imperialist and proponent of the new manliness that the times could produce:

Theodore Roosevelt. This chapter examines discourses of white male power as they were expressed in military display and weaponry, in international relations, and in representations of certain men as the embodiments of "others" who, it was held, were not prepared to run their own societies. These images were contrasted against the Anglo-Saxon "look" and behavior of hegemonic masculinity, particularly that of public figures.

In "Communing with the Gods," I examine the inundation of an increasingly consumerist society with images of white male physical dominance, and I seek links between those images and existing power relations: the racial and sexual hegemony of the white male ruling class. Throughout the century, the ideals of democracy and inalienable rights continued to conflict with the desire of those with power to keep their position; this conflict is seen in one of its most salient forms in the debate about self-government that ensued after the Spanish American War. The paternalistic attitude of the U.S. government towards the Philippines and Cuba soon changed to one of disrespect and authoritarianism; no sooner was Spain defeated than the United States was proclaiming Cubans and Filipinos incapable of self-governance after all and in need of the firm, controlling hand of their "liberator." Thus policy-makers and the popular press defined these peoples by the same terms that had defined the men who were outside the inner circle of elite Anglo-Saxons as well as all women *within* the

United States. They were seen as childlike, unreasonable, and incapable of understanding the concepts of democracy, much less the notion of freedom as following upon fulfillment of civic duty and obedience to law. They were assumed to be incapable of self-control and correct procedure, anarchic, untrustworthy, and unable to arrive at sound judgments. Thus the physical culture movement, the popular press, and mainstream concerns about white supremacy—economic, political, and cultural, fostered what soon would be called "masculinity," at its most stereotypical a personality type that thrived on self-assertion and winning at any cost, cultivated readiness for combat, and valued an image and reputation of power and toughness. The cultural creation of masculinity was effected to a significant extent by means of the visual metaphor of the physically powerful white male as its inarguable symbol. This symbol of masculine dominance played a role as both a means and a justification for the appearance of the United States in the business of imperialism. In its public acceptance as representative of Anglo-Saxon men, this metaphor helped to crystallize a vision of competition that rationalized a path of assertive and interventionist policies with other nations and a military infrastructure that seemed, and still seems, never to be big enough. The iconic muscular white male, although powerful in the flesh, was far stronger as a force on the imagination. It was in the public imagination that this image became a metaphor

for national strength and convinced the public that the United States was ready to contend with other manly nations the world over.

Chapter One

From Andrew Jackson to Charles Darwin:

The White Male Body Emerges

When Horatio Greenough's statue of George Washington, which had been commissioned for the Capitol rotunda, was unveiled in 1841, the public was aghast. The huge likeness of Washington, the father of the proud new republic, was portrayed as the symbol of the nation as if he were a Greek god. Wearing his usual coiffure of waved hair ending in a queue, the first president was represented seated and wearing a toga that draped his legs and revealed a naked torso. Greenough had modeled the head after the bust of Washington by Jean Antoine Houdon and had created the body as a likeness of the sculpture of Zeus by Phidias.[1] The work was roundly ridiculed and condemned, ultimately finding a home at the National Museum of American History.[2] The sacrilege, however, was not the nakedness; it was that this torso was not a mythic figure or a symbol. It was the nation's beloved Washington, and exposing his chest to public viewing was considered indecent. Nudity in antiquities was one matter; an actual historical personality, raising one had skyward and offering the hilt of

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[1] Matthew Baigell, *A Concise History of American Painting and Sculpture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 115.
[2] H.W. Janson, *19th-Century Sculpture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985), 79.

a sword with the other, was another. The art-viewing public had seen representations of nudes before, in paintings of historical events and in sculpture. But at that time, images of nude or nearly nude men were not very frequent in popular discourse. (In all fairness, viewing contemporary dignitaries in the nude or seminude probably would jar public sensibility today, too. Imagine viewing a monument of *any* of the presidents of the United States since that time draped in a toga.) That, however, was on the cusp of change. The reform movements and philosophies of human perfectibility of the early nineteenth century were smoothing the way for public discourse about "the body." Even at the time that Greenough's *Washington* was presented, health reform and various theories that linked physical health with mental and moral well being were on their way to becoming institutions in the United States. Let us begin our story with two historical characters: a belligerent, larger-than-life president of the United States and his ideological and temperamental nemesis, a Philadelphia gentleman and financier.

In an 1834 political cartoon, President Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States, compete in a boxing match (fig. 1.1). Both men are stripped to the waist. Biddle, seen from the rear, looks as if he is wearing nothing more than a sash around his waist and garters at his

"The celebrated fight took place at Washington in 1834, Hickory was seconded by Little Van and Major Jack Downing, with Joe Tammany for bottle holder; Long Harry and Black Dan were Nick's seconds, and Old Mother Bank bottle holder. Several long and severe rounds were fought, and from the immense sums bet, many of the fancy were losers to a large amount. Old Mother B is said to have backed her champion to the tune of more than $150,000. Nick's weight of metal was superior as well as his science, but neither were sufficient for the pluck and wind of Hickory, who shewed through his training and sound condition so effectually that in the last round Nick was unable to come to time and gave in."

Set-to between Old Hickory and Bully Nick, lithograph c. 1834.
Courtesy of the Print Department, Boston Public Library

Fig. 1.1. Reprinted from Hillel Schwartz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies, and Fat* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 22.

knees. The caption tells us that the fight was won by "Hickory [Jackson], who shewed through his training and sound condition so effectually that in the last round Nick was unable to come to time and gave in."[3] The famous feud between Jackson and Biddle about the national bank thus became an exercise in proving manhood. Jackson equated pugnacity and violence with being a man, with honor, and with national destiny. He was not the first to do so, nor was he the last, but Jackson's position as president as well as his reputation and physical appearance were impressive and contributed to his legendary place in U.S. history. He was a colorful and memorable president, and his beliefs about manhood as well as his image validated an existent cultural belief that manliness is proved and recognized by the force with which a man refused to be dominated by another man. Jackson had advised his volunteer troops during the War of 1812 that through the war they would reestablish the national character, a statement that can have meant only that the United States would conform its policies and pronouncements to the contemporary stereotype for manhood. He probably could have assumed that his troops did not need an explanation for what he mean by national character. Certainly he did not mean that through war, they would reestablish the national character according to what were

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[3]Hillel Schwartz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies, and Fat* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 22. Martin Van Buren, whom Jackson picked as his successor to the presidency, is

prescribed as "feminine," or even "womanly" characteristics.[4] Jackson's bellicosity and sense of manhood had been instilled in him very early. Jackson told one of his biographers that had had learned many of his most important lessons from his mother, including lessons in how to be a man: " 'One of the last injunctions given me by her, was never to institute a suit for assault and battery, or for defamation; never to wound the feelings of others nor suffer my own to be outraged.'"[5] The message his mother gave taught Jackson that when a man was attacked or defamed, he did not go to the courts. Instead of bringing a lawsuit, he settled matters himself, gaining the kind of satisfaction that the law could never give. Jackson favored the duel: a face-to-face confrontation that proved to the offender and to the public that he was ready to die or to kill in order to avenge his status as a man among men. Thus Jackson, who was born in 1767, built his identity according to the teaching of a frontier manliness, which even in the eighteenth century held up an alternative to another model of manliness, one that emphasized self-control and moral virtue. This notion of the virtuous male,

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portrayed in the cartoon as a supporter, saying, "'Go to it, Hickory, my old buffer! give [sic] it to him in the bread basket, it will make him throw up his deposits.'"

[4]The cartoon of 1834 was not the first time that Jackson had been lauded for his masculine fortitude. On January 28, 1815 *The Enquirer* had described Jackson as having "an eye quick and penetrating" and as being "a man of Iron," and a few years later, despite the condemnation by nearly all of President James Monroe's Cabinet (including Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, who would be Jackson's vice-president) of Jackson's aggression against the Seminole nation and his execution of two British subjects, public support of Jackson was so strong that no disciplinary action was taken against him. *Enquirer* quotation in John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 157.

which epitomized steadfastness and moral right, was being transformed into a conception of manhood that required readiness for an adversarial confrontation in addition to the demonstration of self-governance and a sense of honor. "Giving in" was understood as an inability to dominate the other, a failure of manhood, a crossing of the gender line into womanhood. According to such counsel as Jackson's mother instilled in him, a man prevailed in a conflict by means of violence, if it came to that, or he deserved public contempt. As the nineteenth century continued its course, a confluence of historical events and phenomena, not least of which was the rise in illustrated periodicals, contributed to the cultural power of this ethos. The fantasy of white male dominance resonated with much of the population, in a variety of ways whether it was by means of fear, experience, reassurance, anxiety, comfort, terror, resignation, or desire. Cultural forces seemed to come from everywhere, as we shall see, to impress this fantasy as reality into the foundation of society, and the most potent ally of these forces was the increasingly ubiquitous visual image of white male muscular strength.

Although attraction to the image of robust physicality had been manifest during the Enlightenment, widespread endorsement by the media of male beauty, physical fitness, and domination did not reach forthright expression in

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[5] James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, V. I (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1859), 68-69.

the U.S. until the second half of the nineteenth century.[6] This chapter discusses the mid-nineteenth century beginnings of the transformation of the values of manliness into a discourse of masculinity and the shift in those discourses from text to image. It addresses the areas of physical culture, sports, physical culture publications, and anthropology, and it shows how this prelude to the glorification of the white male body found its strongest ally in the popular press, a trend that would gather strength during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I will discuss the ways in which anthropometry and eugenics produced a body of so-called evidence that furthered the agendas of white male supremacy and set the stage for the journalistic display of the white male body and the cultural embrace of college athletics. In this way I will set a context for the

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[6] Ronald G. Walters places the advent of the physical culture movement in the United States in the aftermath of the War of 1812, when the Second Great Awakening, a sense of optimism, and large immigrations from England, Germany, and Ireland created conditions that led many middle-class Protestants to believe that they could make the world a better place. Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860* New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Jean-Jacques Rousseau had addressed the realm of physical culture in *Emile* (1762), advising parents to harden their children's bodies against discomfort when they are small and to encourage exercise to make the child robust and healthy: "Let him be a man in his vigor, and soon he will be one in his reason" (118). Rousseau advises his pupil to consider taking up "hard trades" because "they exercise strength and courage at the same time; they are fit for men alone; women do not pretend to them." (200). Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, introduction, trans., and notes by Allan Bloom. (New York: Basic Books, 1979). In addition, ideas of individualism and "natural rights" had brought up a new way of being: self-creation. Benjamin Franklin believed that "the exercise of swimming is one of the most healthy and agreeable in the world" because if its ability to cool the body for hours afterward and for its efficacy in terminating diarrhea. Not surprisingly, Franklin experimented with devices for the hands and feet to enable the swimmer to make faster progress. See *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. L. Jesse Lemisch (New York: New America Library, 1961). Franklin's statement is quoted from Albert Henry Smyth, ed., *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin: Collected and Edited with a Life and Introduction*, V. 5 (New York: Macmillan, 1905-07), 543-45.

celebration of athletics and the explosion of images of the muscular white male during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

Scholarship about the history of manhood and masculinity has taught that in general, in the first half of the nineteenth century, manhood was measured in terms of moral virtue, fortitude, civic contribution, and successful governance of the family. In the second half, physical prowess and the appearance of the body overtook character as evidence of masculine fitness.[7] Interest in the male body and its potential for power and beauty became a phenomenon in its own right at mid-century, when physical culture enthusiasts, physiognomists, and historians interested in the evolution of *homo sapiens* combined forces, however inadvertently, to produce a discourse on anatomy, gender, race, culture, and physical appearance that placed anatomy as the closing argument for the white male as the apex of human development. It was from these proponents of the physical as external evidence of intellectual and ethical capacities that the rhetoric of the muscular manhood became commonplace, the discourses of college and professional athletics and sports journalism blossomed, and the

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[7]E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic, 1993), Roberta J. Park, "Healthy, Moral and Strong: Educational Views of Exercise and Athletics in Nineteenth-Century America," *Fitness in American Culture*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst: U Mass. Press, 1989), 123-68. Michael Kimmel, "Consuming Manhood: The Feminization of American Culture and the Recreation of the Male Body, 1832-1920," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28(1), 1994, 7-36.

image of the physically powerful white male took on symbolic status as ruler of the world.

The Physical Culture Movement to 1870

It began innocently enough. Popular interest in physical culture in the United States began with the reform and transcendentalist energies of the antebellum era, a trend that included everything from an euphoric relation to the universe to a commitment to vegetarianism and regular bowel movements. From the first, the physical culture movement in the United States was an imported phenomenon, with gymnastic exercises borrowed from, among others, the fitness philosophy of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, who in 1811 inaugurated in Germany a regimen of organized group calisthenics designed to serve the dual purposes of nationalistic purity and masculine dominance. Jahn's program was a response to the French defeat of Prussia and quite overtly linked the culture of the body with concern for military muscle and nationalistic pride. He sought to create unity among German youth through a program of exercises that would foster fellowship and prepare them for military service in German unification. Jahn marketed his program, called *turnerverein*, by appealing to nostalgia for the rhetoric of Teutonic ideals: fidelity to the fatherland, honesty, and bodily strength. This was closely akin to the belief of antebellum health reformers that strengthening the body would strengthen the will and would lead to higher

planes of intellectual and moral existence. The Scandinavian countries, particularly Denmark and Sweden, followed suit with calisthenics routines known as "farmers' exercises," which were, like Jahn's routines, performed in large, precisely arranged groups, much like military formations.

The belief in the connection between physical health and moral development was not limited to exercise programs, however. Physicians, too, were interested in the interrelationship of physical culture, mental functioning, and character. The *Journal of Health*, one of the earliest health-reform publications, was established in 1829 by a group of Philadelphia doctors (it lasted only four years, but many other such periodicals had their turn). One of the best known and most published of the health-reform doctors was Dr. William Andrus Alcott, who in 1836 took over the editorship of the *American Annals of Education and Instruction and Journal of Literary Institutions*. Alcott was a prolific writer on health reform, children, marital relations, and outdoor exercise. He served as president of the American Physiological Society, founded in 1837, wrote books about a variety of subjects to advise the white middle class about conduct, "marital relations," education, etiquette, gymnastics, and diet. Health reform was open to everyone and extended far beyond exercise instructors and doctors: temperance and healthful diets were prominent issues, and fresh air, cold water, exercise, and a vegetarian diet were seen by some as the path to salvation.

Sylvester Graham, a Presbyterian minister, was busy lecturing about whole grains, cold bath, early rising, and the evils of masturbation. In the next decades, educators as well as physicians came to appreciate the importance of recreation and exercise, and many of them gave lectures, wrote articles and even founded publications in the effort to integrate the idea of physical fitness into the school day and into public acceptance.[8] Mary Gove Nichols, a health reformer and Graham disciple, began her career as a lecturer to women about health issues and eventually changed her loyalties to the "water cure." Hydropathy, or the water cure, attracted many adherents seeking to restore health by douches, enemas, and various means of bathing. It had its own journal for a time, the *Water Cure Journal and Herald of Reforms* (1845-61), which later became *The Herald of Health.* Dr. William W. Hall published *Hall's Journal of Health*, which focused on preventive medicine and Hall's specialty, consumption.[9] Phrenology, the determination of a person's mental and moral characteristics by analyzing the topography of the cranium, was popular in the 1830s and beyond. Orson and Lorenzo Fowler turned phrenology into a successful business venture during that time and promoted other such interests via their publishing house, Fowlers and Wells. Orson Fowler's interest in phrenology led him to become an advocate

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[8] Park, "Healthy, Moral and Strong," 123-168; 134-135.

[9] Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1850-1865* , Vol. II, (1938. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 87.

of physical exercise because, he said, it would increase the size of the brain and the acuity of one's intelligence.[10]

Physical exercise, although debated as to whether it was beneficial or not (Did it deplete the body's reserves, or restore them?), was about to take root in the United States. Since the 1820s, when the calisthenics movement had been introduced in the United States via book reviews in periodicals and Prussian and Scandinavian immigrants, exercise regimens had found a home in the general health reform movement. News about exercise educators who had migrated from the European continent to England came to the United States via periodicals. Exercise books found a market with reform-minded persons who sought instruction in self-improvement. These books, although grounded in physical and moral culture philosophies and weaving those ideas into their instruction, were also books that taught, often via illustrations, physical techniques. Several decades before the Civil War, illustrations of partially unclothed white males had begun to appear in books about physical culture and exercise. These were not illustrations of Greek and Roman sculptures. These

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[10] For more on the various reform movements, see Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* . For detail on the Fowler brothers and phrenology as well as history about physical culture movements of the time, see Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the lives of American Women 1800-1870* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998). Also see James C. Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980).

images, made innocuous to their audience by the contexts of exercise instruction and, later, sporting events, were a break from an attitude of impropriety about the male body (unless it was represented in ancient sculpture) and step towards an acceptance of images of the contemporary male body. For instance, in 1834, Donald Walker published his book titled *British Manly Exercises; in Which Rowing and Sailing are now first discussed*, a book that physical culture historian Jan Todd calls "undoubtedly the most influential book on purposive exercise published in England during the nineteenth century."[11] In the ninth edition, published in 1855, Walker blends the doctrine of physical strength with the obligatory justification of moral improvement, thus pacifying those who might look askance at "exercise." "Cultivation of bodily strength," he states, "in preference to every thing else, would establish only the right of the strongest, as it is found to exist in the origin of society. To cultivate the faculties of the mind exclusively, would produce only the weakness of sentiment or excess of passion. There is, for every individual, a means of making all these dispositions act in harmony; and the due blending of physical and moral education alone can produce it."[12] *Manly Exercises* contains illustrations, line drawings that show various exercises, and all

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[11] Todd, 96.

[12] "Craven" [Donald Walker], *Walker's Manly Exercises; Containing Rowing, Sailing, Riding, Driving, Racing, Hunting, Shooting, and Other Manly Sports.* ninth ed. (London: H.G. Bohn, 1855), 5.

of the figures are fully clothed, wearing a blouse with a cravat, tight pants, and exercise slippers. The only exceptions are the illustrations for swimming. Those figures wear trunks.[13] The images, however, presented to clarify written instruction, were the beginning of a shift toward a proud display of the athletic white male body that coalesced discourses of physical superiority, national pride and imperialism, and masculinity into one visual symbol. With the increase in images of the male body, the rhetoric of manliness began to change as well, as a number of scholars have pointed out, from such concepts about interior qualities as "virtue," "stalwartness," "honor," and "integrity," to attributes which involved physical power and virility, or masculinity.[14] The seeds for that change

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[13] Walker published *Exercises for Ladies* in 1835. About mid-century, books about calisthenics and gymnastics were being published by writers in the United States and were finding a steady readership. Catharine Beecher, domestic economy, education, and health-reformer, published *Calisthenic Exercises for Schools, Families and Health Establishments* and *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* in 1856, both by Harper and Brothers, New York.
Dioclesian Lewis, a health reformer and physician, published *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children* in 1862 (Boston: Ticknor and Fields). Both authors included numerous illustrations in their texts to demonstrate the exercises. Other such texts were published as well, although these were among the most widely used. See Todd, Walters, and Whorton, *op cit.*

[14] Numerous works on the history of manhood in the United States and Europe are available. For a history of the construction of colonial manhood, see Anne S. Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Antebellum white manhood is examined in Ronald Preston Byars, *The Making of the Self-made Man: the Development of Masculine Roles and Images in Ante-bellum America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1980).
For a variety of approaches, see Elizabeth Pleck and Joseph Pleck, *The American Man*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc., 1980); T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). Lears discusses the "martial ideal," the fears of the feminization of United States culture, the fascination with physical power, the enthusiasm for sports, the creation of an overseas empire, and virility. Lears's study of antimodernism is implicitly a study of the fears and obsessions about masculinity that overtook many of the "moral and intellectual leaders of the American WASP

germinated in a context that exalted combat and militarism as a way to impose correct values, strengthen republican ideals, and allow the stronger force to win. In "Representative Men," published from a lecture series he gave in the 1840s, Ralph Waldo Emerson waxes rhapsodic about Napoleon Bonaparte, the type of man which Emerson was not: strong, quick, forceful, action-oriented. He says that Napoleon was "never weak and literary but acts with the solidity and the precision of natural agents. [He was] a man of stone and iron, capable of sitting on horseback sixteen or seventeen hours, of going many days together without rest or food, except by snatches, and with the speed and spring of a tiger in action . . .. He sees where the matter hinges, throws himself on the precise point of resistance, and slights all other considerations."[15] A cultural transition was

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bourgeoisie," who functioned as the "'point men' of cultural change" (xiv, xv). Other excellent studies include Mark Gerzon, *A Choice of Heroes: The Changing Faces of American Manhood* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982); Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen, *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago and London: Chicago, 1990), E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Michael S. Kimmel, "Consuming Manhood: The Feminization of American Culture and the Recreation of the Male Body, 1832-1920," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 33, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 7-36; George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[15]Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Napoleon; or, the Man of the World." In *Representative Men :Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 727-45. *Representative Men*, published in 1850, collected the seven lectures on this theme that Emerson gave in the 1840s. Emerson was following the lead of Thomas Carlyle, whom he had visited in the early 1830s and by whom he had been deeply impressed. In *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History,* originally written as a series of lectures in 1840, Carlyle named his six heroic types: divinity, prophet, poet, priest, man of letters, and king. As Michael K. Goldberg states, the subject of heroism was a "major Victorian preoccupation. . . . Carlyle's 1840 lectures were, therefore, an incursion into the mainstream of Victorian thought." (xxxiii, xxxiv). Goldberg also emphasizes the "strong visual character of his imagination," and argues that it is "apt . . . to see him as a painter of historical portraits" (xxxv). Carlyle's belief in the power of image to reveal character is worth noting: Goldberg points out

beginning, and whether it was Jackson versus the banks, or Emerson's representative men, the discourse on manliness was placing less importance on qualities of mind and character and a new emphasis on masculine power and the signs by which it could be recognized.

During the 1850s and '60s, the preoccupation with athletics, fitness and strength increased significantly. One of the earlier hints of what was to come in terms of strength training and male body display in the United States may be dated from the years when Thomas Wentworth Higginson, George Windship, and others published articles which celebrated strength and form. They addressed their messages to women as well as to men, but the emphasis for the most part was on the development of male muscular strength. Windship, a doctor and weight lifter, and David P. Butler, who became committed to weight lifting when he took it up to restore his own poor health, developed and popularized strength-training, inventing and refining weight-lifting machines that came to be called "Health Lifts," lecturing, and selling their lifting

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that in Carlyle's historical research, he invariably attempted to " 'procure a bodily likeness of the personage inquired after; a good *Portrait* if such exists' "(xxxvi). Carlyle's faith in physiognomy was threefold: he believed that character can be read in the face, that statements, actions and artistic expression are also a form of physiognomy, and that a nation's character, or physiognomy, could be read through its history (xxxvi). Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. Notes and introduction by Michael K. Goldberg. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

equipment.[16] These products, which glorified physical power, appeared after several decades of physical culture writing that had concentrated on the body as an entity to be monitored and regulated with respect to its nutritional, respiratory, and sexual economies, with mild exercise being a necessary part of moral health.[17] Exercise enthusiasts continued to write analyses of the interdependencies between the mental and the physical, paying special attention to the belief that temperament and physical characteristics were immutably locked into each other.[18] Higginson, a writer, editor, Unitarian minister, abolitionist, health reformer, and soldier (he was a colonel in the first regiment of African-American soldiers in the Civil War), issued the call for better bodies in his 1858 essay, "Saints, and Their Bodies," in which he criticized the rejection of exercise by the clergy and other professions, including writing among them. He also censured his audience (whom he assumed was Protestant) for its criticism of

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[16] See Todd, Ch. 7, "Bigger Bodies, Better Brains: Phrenology and the Health Lift," *Physical Culture,* op cit., 173-208.

[17] Thomas Hughes published *Tom Brown's School Days* in 1857, which was a best seller and exerted tremendous influence over popular culture and the acceptance of physical education in schools. The novel, placed at Rugby School, Warwickshire, presented life at the school for boys and won adherents to the creed of team sports and the desirability of courage, strength, and physical prowess for boys and men. The book also won converts to the Muscular Christianity movement and became so identified with it that in the late '70s, Hughes was compelled to begin a series of classes for young men and to publish a book, *The Manliness of Christ*, in order to disavow the connection between Christianity and physical power.

[18] This union of the mental, moral, and physical took a turn that many of its originators may not have foreseen. When evolutionary theory, construction of "racial differences" and "sexual differences" by practitioners of physical anthropology, advocates of anthropometrical hierarchies, and proponents of "white" and "white male" supremacy threw their lots together

the rare clergyman who revealed athletic tendencies. Higginson deplored the puniness of the bodies of the saints (especially the Protestant ones) and declared that "nothing this side of ancient Greece, we fear, will afford adequate examples of the union of saintly souls and strong bodies." He advocated bringing exercise to the schools and to the burgeoning urban occupation of clerking as ways to improve the health of the populace. He recognized the popular resistance to the combination of exercise and the clergy, but also noted that times were changing as "our moral conceptions are expanding to take in that 'athletic virtue' of the Greeks."[19]

Higginson on barbarism and civilization

Higginson equated moral elevation with muscular visibility and general robustness and contended that men with strong bodies would perform greater intellectual and spiritual deeds than could those who gave no attention to exercise.[20] Despite the warnings about sickly bodies and the praise of outdoor sports, the *Atlantic Monthly*, which published no illustrations, did not make an exception for "Saints, and Their Bodies." Nor did it do so for Higginson's

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later in the century, the contingency of mental and moral capacities on sex and race had devastating consequences for the furtherance of a democratic society.

[19]Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Saints, and Their Bodies," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1858, 582-595.

[20]Higginson argued for the necessity of physical health to the health of the nation and added "guaranty us against physical degeneracy, and we can risk all other perils" (586), thus unwittingly adding rhetoric to the Social Darwinist and eugenicist discourse that had yet to begin and would reach a fever pitch with Theodore Roosevelt's diatribes about "race suicide."

"Barbarism and Civilization," "Gymnastics," or "Physical Courage." In "Barbarism," Higginson argued against the encroaching fear that as civilization (he defines this as having the power to keep peace, make institutions, develop literature and art) develops, the people decay physically. He states that civilization promotes physical training, arguing that the "great athletes of the world have been civilized . . .and the average of life, health, size, and strength is highest to-day among those races where knowledge and wealth and comfort are most widely spread."[21] Higginson says that averages in the size of human beings have increased with time and that "bodily strength goes with the highest civilization." He urges the adoption of physical exercise for women, and cites the physical power of the colonists and pioneers, whose "firm, unwearying, bodily muscle" has felled the forest that erstwhile overspread the continent.[22] The article includes even a table that shows statistics comparing New Zealanders with various populations of New Englanders and Britons: differences in height, weight, area of chest, and strength in lifting are shown.[23] This type of selective statistical table became increasingly common in popular literature as a way of legitimating racist pronouncements. This is not to say, however, that the mind's

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[21] Higginson, "Barbarism and Civilization," *Out-Door Papers* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), 112. This article contains the earliest reference to "race suicide" that I have found in nineteenth century literature. "And yet, by the common lamentation, one would suppose that all civilization is a slow suicide of the race . . .." Higginson, "Barbarism and Civilization," 112.
[22] Ibid., 129.

eye was always left to its own devices. Much of the literature of the day contains descriptions of male bodies, the rhetoric taking two basic tacks: the uplifting variety and the more admonitory strain, evoking mental images of health and right living or of sickliness and degeneracy.[24] Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous statement in 1858 in the *Atlantic* that the "stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, paste-complexioned youth" of today "never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage" and Higginson's collection of essays about physical culture were not illustrated, but books about the development of the body often did offer illustrations.[25] In books specifically about exercise, male figures were often portrayed as if copied from Greek sculpture or pottery. The figures were naked and active, in the process of throwing the discus, wrestling, or running. Female bodies were shown clothed or draped and only occasionally naked, and then only to demonstrate a "type" of female body and temperament. Physical culture rhetoric fused with notions of evolution and physical perfectibility to create images of men and women who, someday, would take the forms of the statues of

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[23] Ibid., 123.

[24] See esp. Sylvester Graham, *Chastity, in a course of Lectures to Young Men intended also for the serious consideration of Parents and Guardians* (New York: Fowler and Wells Co., 1890). Graham's lectures were first published in 1837. Much of his "evidence" of the link between masturbation and physical debility rests on graphic descriptions of bodily decay and the acquisition of deformities as a result of "self-abuse."

[25] Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. I, No. VII, May 1858, 881; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Out-Door Papers*, Boston, 1863. Higginson analyzed the alienation of the clergy from the general populace as caused by a lack of manly life

antiquity, which presented the standards of beauty and symmetry towards which we should all aspire.

Issues of fitness, gender, sovereignty and racial lineage and dominance were subtexts of verbal discourse on the body. But the subtext could be kept somewhat implicit only so long as the eye looked at words, and not at images. Writings about the body concealed the iconographic male via the conceptual realm of strength, valor, bravery, and manliness. Few, if any, writers acknowledged that what this really meant was that a (white) man should appear as if he could be victorious over an antagonist. And this was really the crux of the matter--what was at issue was physical strength and the seesaw of dominance and defeat, with life itself being a proving ground for superiority. Inherent in the definition of superiority, of course, is the inevitable alternative of inferiority: if you were not classified as one, you were as the other. This theme forms the nucleus of Windship's 1862 "autobiographical sketch," in which he made clear the dynamic of masculine competition and dominance that determined the course of his life.

In this autobiographical sketch, Windship details his odyssey from being one of the two smallest boys at Harvard in the class of 1854 to being the strongest by the time he graduated. His interest in strength resulted from being ridiculed for his size by an older boy, whom he could not challenge for fear of public

humiliation, and from a series of incidents not long after that involved being bullied. Again, because of his size, he could not challenge the bully. He vowed to a friend that come two years hence, he would demand an apology or give him a thrashing. Accordingly, Windship embarked on a program of gymnastics and weight lifting, and at the end of two years, he had greatly increased his size and strength. Although he obtained the degree of doctor of medicine, the guiding force of his life was the strength, which he tested in himself and proved with feats of lifting.[26] At the time he wrote his sketch, he had lifted 2,007 pounds by means of a wooden yoke across his shoulders, and anticipated reaching his goal of 3,000 pounds. The sole focus of Windship's training was the development of muscle, in much that same way that bodybuilders train today. Despite being a physician, he was not concerned with fitness or health and in fact appears to have become obsessed with muscular development. As Lewis G. Janes pointed out after Windship's death at forty-two, he "aimed to promote the development of large and hard muscles, and in his own person exhibited wonderful results in the production of such development." Janes concluded his article on Windship by commenting, "Dr. Windship's method, resulting in the sudden termination of

[26] George Barker Windship, "Autobiographical Sketches of a Strength-Seeker." *Atlantic Monthly*, v. IX, January 1862, 102-115. Windship's theory of bodybuilding interposed the concepts of personal responsibility and will power between the reigning beliefs about heredity and predestination ("it's out of my hands") and about the ascendancy of the spiritual over the

his life, is one more example of the pernicious effects of forcing abnormal muscular development."[27]

The notion of proportion became paramount in interpretations of the ideal body. "Perfect proportion" offered both a goal and a standard by which one could measure one's deviance from it. D. H. Jacques, a health reformer who was influenced by phrenology, wrote in his 1861 *Hints Toward Physical Perfection: or, the Philosophy of Human Beauty* that human perfectibility is possible and that, with the correct procedures, the human being can be improved, just as the horse and the peach had been.[28] Jacques critiqued body parts as indicators of perfection, with especial attention to heads and faces in the interest of determining racial types and racial beauty. Jacques joined the school of thought that held that physical "perfection," the criteria of which always matched the fantasized ideal type of the writer's own body--white, male, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant--was the "grand external sign of goodness of organization and integrity of function . . .. In

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physical ("it's not important anyway."). The project of bodybuilding gave its participants a sense of physical control and of power over their lives.

[27] Lewis G. Janes, "George B. Windship, M.D.--His Relations to Physical Culture." *Herald of Health*, no vol., c. 1878, 359-363.

[28] D. H. Jacques, *Hints Toward Physical Perfection: or, the Philosophy of Human Beauty; showing how to acquire and retain Bodily Symmetry, Health, and Vigor, secure Long Life, and avoid the Infirmities and Deformities of Age* (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1861). See also Todd, 17 and 103. In the eighteenth century, Jacob Winckelmann, who, in his perceptions and criticism of classical sculpture re-envisioned the history of art, focused on the beautiful and the sublime in terms of the male body, switching the terms as they had previously been applied to female and male bodies and assigning the beautiful, the erotic, to the male. See Alex Potts excellent analysis of Winckelmann's work, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven

the proportion, therefore, that we approach physical perfection, we become beautiful."[29] He used the phrase "physical goodness" as the correlate of beauty, and this concept pertained to the innards as well as to the external. Despite Jacques' attention to the minutiae of the human form, including the angle of the face in profile, the size of the opening of the eyelid, and how one's hair parted, the illustrations are mostly partial, simplified line drawings of what are supposed to be Greek sculpture or "types." In chapter two, titled "The Perfect Man and Woman," we see the male body in the form of a drawing of a statue called "Reposing after the Chase" (fig. 1.2).[30] The figure holds a drape over his left arm and rests his hand on his hip; the drape appears at the front again on the right side, held magically in place on his out-thrust right hip and pinned mysteriously over his pubic area. Plate VI, on the other hand, portrays a woman, naked to the waist, titled "Preparing for the Bath" (fig. 1.3). Her drape, too, depends from her left arm, but here the cloth covers her from the waist down. Jacques acknowledges that the "great artists" have shown that the

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and London: Yale, 1994), especially chapters 4 and 5, "Beauty and Sublimity" and "Ideal Bodies," 113-181.

[29]Jacques, 32.

[30]Jacques, Plate V. A good example of the ways in which male bodies were displayed under cover of reference to the ancient Greeks may be seen in *Wonders of Bodily Strength and Skill* by Guillaume Depping, where the captions beneath the illustrations include such assurances as "from a painted vase at . . .," " "from a carving in . . .," "From a painting on a jar in . . .," "From an ancient statue"). (Trans. Charles Russell. London, Paris, and New York: Cassell Petter & Galpin, n.d. Scribner (New York) published the book in 1871.)

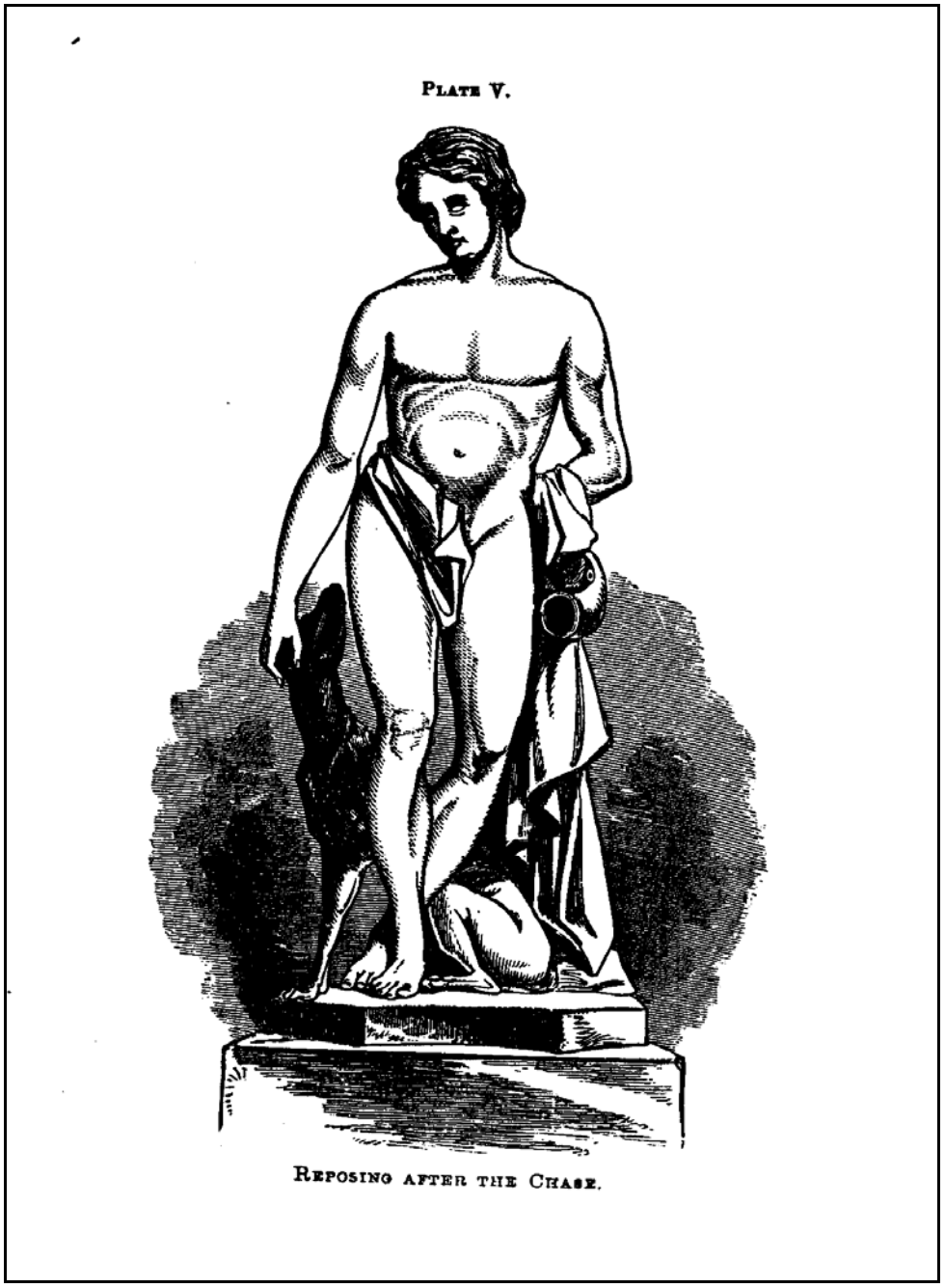

Fig. 1.2. "Reposing after the Chase." D. H. Jacques, *Hints Toward Physical Perfection*, New York: 1861, chapter 2, n.p.

possibility for human physical perfection is something we have not yet reached.

Hints Toward Physical Perfection is a mixture of anatomical description and instruction about the way to beauty, health, and vigor, which purportedly provides a basis for the qualitative assessments that follow. For example, in chapter two, titled "The Perfect Man and Woman," Jacques poses a query which entails, by the form of the question itself, its own answer: "by what signs may the perfect man and woman be known, when they shall have made their advent upon the earth?" He then proceeds to define those signs himself, which makes his subsequent answer to the question inarguable. For Jacques, beauty is the evidence of "goodness of organization and integrity of function; and the highest possible beauty can indicate nothing less than perfection in these particulars."[31] Conversely, the lack of beauty in any "member or system of the body" shows a lack of health. This ideology was current with scientific conclusions about race and gender of that time; Jacques goes on to say that a misshapen cranium indicates a malformation in the brain, and is "a sure sign of want of balance or symmetry in the mental system."[32] "Misshapen" is not defined, but its contours can be inferred from the illustrations, which feature what to Jacques were

[31]Ibid., 32.
[32]Ibid., 32.

Fig. 1.3. "Preparing for the Bath." D. H. Jacques, *Hints Toward Physical Perfection*, chapter 2, plate n. p.

beautiful heads. Jacques says that it is from "external forms and colors, and their arrangement," that beauty is read and that physical perfection, including internal functioning, is proved. His ideology of form telling function has an interesting twist. Although logic would dictate that healthy internal functioning would make external appearance more *similar* for the human species, Jacques creates a distinction between the female and the male that defies his own philosophy. Rather than good health lending itself to similar anatomical forms, Jacques asserts that the link between health and beauty "demands in the female form what would be ugliness, if not absolute deformity, in the male figure, and *vice versa*."[33] Therefore, perfect physical organization creates distinct forms in the male and the female, extending to such areas of physical functioning as grace, strength and agility. Jacques was not alone in this oppositional definition of female and the male. As Gail Bederman and others have pointed out, anthropology, gender discourse, and nationalism were all developing along the notion that "one could identify advanced civilizations by their degree of sexual differentiation."[34] The male body is characterized by power, says Jacques, while the female body, by virtue of its "bending and varied lines, gracefully rounded

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[33]Ibid., 33.

[34]Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 25.

limbs, smooth surfaces, and elasticity" is "indicative of delicacy and grace."[35] In both sexes, however, facial beauty "depends much upon the profile, which, in its perfect form, approaches a straight line."[36] In woman, the nose must be straight, while men's noses are slightly aquiline, indicating "the strength and energy of character which should characterize the masculine element."[37] Jacques tells the reader that the signs by which the perfect woman will be known include the following: the nose must be delicately chiseled, the upper lip must extend beyond the lower lip, the hair must be brown, auburn, or golden, a woman's neck must be white, smooth, straight, and flexible, "the cheeks must have the true blending of the rose and the lily," and so on. By Jacques's definition, it is impossible for anyone who is not white *and* does not have a straight profile to be considered beautiful. This is one example of the ways in which "whiteness" was defined. In writing about physical perfection, Jacques assumes the exclusion of all peoples other than those of western European ancestry; he does not mention this exclusion and writes as if it will be assumed by the reader as well. His purpose is to define, from that partial population, which anatomical characteristics qualify as "beautiful." Further, it is also impossible for anyone who does not match his definition of beauty even to be considered in good

[35]Ibid., 34.
[36]Ibid., 39.
[37]Ibid, 40.

health; a deviation in one's appearance from ideal whiteness indicates an organic disorder. Jacques's book is liberally illustrated with examples of these ideal types in the form of images of classical statuary. The creation of racial categories as a way to define physical perfectibility was an especially pernicious weapon in solidifying social hierarchies and racial ideologies.

The definitions of proportion, coinciding with Classical and Greek sculpture, included the criterion of symmetry and size. The determination of these characteristics required a system of measurement, and a system of quantification was already available.[38] Anthropometry, although in practice

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[38] The interest in measurement, classification, race, and sex was not new. Samuel Morton had published *Crania Americana* in 1839, which claimed be empirical evidence of differences in cranial capacities being proportionate to intelligence. Morton's book was followed by J.C. Nott's and George R. Gliddon's *Types of Mankind: or, Ethnological Researches* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1854). *Types of Mankind* was dedicated to the memory of Morton and contains selections from his "inedited papers as well as a forty-one page "memoir" of his life. Interestingly, considering the hagiographic nature of the book, Morton was a monogeneticist and Nott and Gliddon were polygeneticists.

In his quest to impose scientific order upon humanity in a way that would not challenge existing racial and sexual hierarchies, Morton devised a system of measuring the volume of skulls and determined that the "Caucasian" skulls had the largest internal capacity. Measuring the cubic inches of white pepper seed that skulls could hold, grouping those skulls ethnographically, and asserting that the greater the volume, the greater the intelligence, resulted in white males being classified as the most intelligent. The importance of Morton's work and that of other scientists interested in questions of race, evolution, species, and the effects of environment on characteristics cannot be overestimated. Their research fed into the concern of established power to justify an ideology of white superiority and supremacy that also created the hierarchies of gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation within its own population. For detailed discussion, see John S. Haller, Jr. *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900* (Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1971), and John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1974). Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man*, offers a corrective to Morton's conclusions. Gould replicated Morton's research and, finding results far different from those Morton published, came to significantly different conclusions. Gould

merely a system of measurement that involved instruments, numbers, and human bodies, was a tremendous influence on the visuality of anatomy and the idea that an ideal body exists and is attainable. At the time of the Civil War, as the human form and its ideal sexual and racial characteristics gained interest, the most attention was paid to white male, whose body took on the dual status of being both the norm and the superior form. To write of the most highly developed human form was to write of white males.[39] Although the Civil War slowed the momentum of the physical culture movement, the war's effect on the cultural awareness of men's bodies was enormous. The publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* created a climate of urgency in the areas of physical anthropology and biology, and the Union army provided a ready-made pool of subjects for establishing statistics on

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discusses Morton's method of science and the social and political ideologies from which science took form in the nineteenth century (New York: Norton, 1978).

[39] As has been noted above, interest in physical education for women was emerging in the form of theories, regimens, instructors, and institutions. However, the discourse about women and physical culture was characterized by debate about the advisability of exercise for women. The belief that exercise was inappropriate for women and that it interfered with or even ruined a woman's ability to conceive and to bear children gained adherents over the course of the century, in reaction to growing numbers of middle and upper class women sought outlets for exercise and education. The debate was split between those who believed that physical fitness was important for women's health, and those who thought that a woman's highest function and raison d'être was to produce offspring, and that exercise robbed a woman of energy for this function. If one believed that, then one could hardly countenance this perversion of her role and still be a responsible and morally upright man. For it was men who were in control of the public expression of this debate, although women took sides as well. For some of the contemporary arguments about this issue, see Louise Newman, *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities: "Popular Science," 1870-1915* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985).

the size, strength, and conformation of men's bodies.[40] In 1861, President Lincoln had created the United States Sanitary Commission in order to make a study of federal troops to determine their condition, to gather statistics, and to improve army life. The Commission conducted the most well-known study, published in 1869, with Benjamin Apthorp Gould, actuary to the commission, as its principal investigator.[41] In 1862, Congress authorized Lincoln to employ African-Americans in the army. The consequences of this policy for the racial classifications of anthropometry could not have been more significant: the Commission now had a huge pool of subjects for its study which now offered the opportunity to collect statistics that would point to "racial differences." The Commission sought to determine the statistically average man, and even went so far as to compile statistics on the average Kentuckian, the average Pennsylvanian, the average "Indian" (North American), and so forth.

The study had other consequences as well. As John Haller points out, the lack of "intelligent classification" proved disastrous in terms of having meaningful results. The designers of the study failed to create a way to define,

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[40]See Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution.* The physical culture movement was not the only context for the representation of men's bodies. During the Civil War the male body was presented abundantly in the form of press coverage of the war. *Harper's Weekly* in particular covered the war in detail, and much of its coverage was illustrative.[40] *Harper's* didn't display the male body *qua* body, even though anthropometric studies were being done on the troops.

[41]United States Sanitary Commission, *Sanitary Menoirs of the War of the Rebellion, Investigations of the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers*. By Benjamin Apthorp Gould. New York: Hurd and Houghton for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, 1869.

determine, and classify persons with both African and European ancestry; they studied an Iroquois tribe and then extrapolated their findings to describe "Indians" in general. Even in the Iroquois study, they had not thought to find out how many of the subjects were of mixed ancestry. In addition, not only was the study seriously flawed conceptually but the examinations themselves were riddled with error. Those employed by the Commission often didn't know how to use the measuring instruments, had little knowledge about the nature of their task, and often learned their jobs via nothing more than a circular.[42] Unfortunately, these problems did not detract from the credibility of the studies or inhibit their use by later theorists, who were still citing them decades later. Haller comments that the greatest irony of the Civil War is that Lincoln's Sanitary Commission was the means by which an official, Union-government-sponsored study created what could be called a scientific body of racially based statistics that could not be discredited as "pro-slavery." The Commission's "anthropometric investigations were used in the late nineteenth century to support institutional racism. The war acted as a 'carrier' for those racial attitudes that were a part of the prewar period."[43] (Sargent, in fact, cites several reports from these Civil War studies in the chapter that he later contributed to a study of

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[42]John S. Haller, Jr. *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 20-23.
[43]Ibid, 34.

the "American Commonwealth."[44]) Thus racism was given the blessing of quantitative science and carried over not only through time but bled into every other area of cultural life. The most pernicious effect of these anthropometric practices was the use made of the findings to supposedly explain and to justify beliefs, theories and policies of white supremacy and the subordination, control, and degradation of other racial categories, categories that had in fact been created by the investigators themselves. "Knowledge" about various peoples took on the stature of irrefutability because it was based on "science." Physical measurements were used to extrapolate intelligence, morals, cultural behaviors, and temperament. Craniometry, the measurement of the skull, already had a place in the racial classification pantheon. Paul Broca, one of the founders of the Society of Anthropology of Paris (1859), invented many instruments for measuring various aspects of the skull, including the goniometer, which measured facial angle. The goniometer led to tenacious theories about the relation of the angle of the forehead to evolutionary advancement and to

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[44] D. A. Sargent, "The Physical State of the American People," *The United States of America,* ed. Nathan Shaler, vol. 3 (New York: D. Appleton, 1894) 1122-45. Sargent organized the races in the Union Army thus: American, Celtic, Teutonic, negro, [sic] "the mixed Spanish-American of New Mexico" (1125). He discusses briefly the "mental characteristics of these people, which find their expression in the form and structure of the body which is often regarded as wholly physical" (1125). He cites another of these reports in his discussion of the influence of region and occupation on susceptibility to disease and includes the information that "all diseases were more prevalent among light-complexioned persons" and that men from twenty to twenty-five and from five feet, three inches to five feet, nine inches in height were least affected with disorders (1129).

intelligence.[45] For decades, fitness enthusiasts and physical culture experts used Gould's study as a benchmark and proof of white male superiority.

The results of this mass-measurement movement led to one conclusion: the physical condition of white males in the United States was grim. The decade following the war witnessed a new level of interest in white male strength and fitness, which fortified distinctions that created race, class, and gender and fed from the more momentous social questions of dominance. Challenges to the dominance of the white male were everywhere: antebellum immigrations from Germany and Ireland, continued immigration, war with Mexico and its subsequent border changes, the advent of Reconstruction, and resumption by women of the fight for civil rights and occupational opportunity—all of which pointed to a social order that was in serious danger of upheaval—seemed to provide good reasons for the reassertion of white male dominance. It was time for all good (white) men to assure the vitality and longevity of their way of life. They could do this in part by becoming strong and vigorous, thereby enabled to dominate groups that threatened to usurp their position. As subordinate groups gained strength and became more vocal and visually present in the culture, the notion of a physically deteriorating middle and upper class created a cultural

[45]Haller notes that some skeptics of Broca's ideas were troubled by his findings: "when, for example, they discovered that the shape of the skulls of Negroes and Scandinavians were similar

fantasy of the subsumption of those classes into the sea of the rising working class. Fears of being outnumbered and overcome, and racial, ethnic and class "mixing," which amounts to a fantasy of being overpowered and forced to intermarry and breed (surely an inexplicable fantasy) grew with each report of the number of immigrants that had disembarked. Herbert Spencer's ideas about evolution, especially his arguments that inner organization adapts to exterior conditions and that physical survival is dependent in part on morality and ethics, were stirred into public discourse and transformed into exhortations to the middle classes about the imperative of physical fitness. The images of Anglo-Saxon strength were part of the rhetoric of its successful reproduction and it maintenance of cultural dominance. The muscular white male became important as a symbol of domestic order and also as a potential force against European nations, should that ever be necessary. Part of the message from the fitness sector was that English and German men were far superior to their counterparts in the United States. As Higginson had pointed out in 1858, "to the American people [physical health] has a stupendous importance, because it is the only attribute of power in which they are losing ground."[46] It was after the war, when statistics from the physical examinations for the military were collected and

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enough to classify them in the same race grouping, it was apparent to many that something was wrong." Haller, 15, 16.

[46]Higginson, "Saints," 586.

published, that a new visual interest began with respect to physical culture: not only how to do exercises, but also, what a healthy Anglo-Saxon male body looked like.

Over the next decade, this mode of advertisement for the white male body proliferated dramatically, as the physical culture and athletics movements united with new printing technology to increase the appetite as it fed the hunger for images. The fact that the images were not only artists' interpretations but, in many cases, were entirely fictional as well was of no consequence to a public that could not get enough of pictures. The mode of consumption shifted from reading to looking, from a need to read for oneself to a need to see for oneself. Two periodicals in particular capitalized on this appetite for the visual: *Harper's Weekly, A Journal of Civilization*, and *The National Police Gazette*. Although they were not the only periodicals to transfer the mode of communication from the verbal to the visual, these two were in the vanguard of the transition from a text-oriented, linear, abstracted, and time-consuming way of communicating in print to an image-oriented, synchronic, and immediate way. Other periodicals, too, became known and respected for their illustrations. Such genteel periodicals as *Scribner's Monthly* prided itself on the quality of its illustrations and contributed to the demand for increasingly realistic images. This change in information transmission accelerated as printing technology became faster and methods of

reproduction improved. The printing press powered by steam meant faster and cheaper production of the pages, and changes in image reproduction effected the same advantages. Steel plates fell into disuse, and wood engravings took their place. Electrotyping made it possible to make unlimited reproductions regardless of the material used for the original engraving, and woodcuts were electrotyped for large runs. In addition, the technique of photographing directly onto wood meant that talented engravers could reproduce the image onto the wood. The gap between the artist's rendering and the engraver's version on wood no longer existed. Some printers learned to print excellent reproductions using the cylinder press, which gave an advantage in reducing the time it took to complete a run. Because of these advances, the consumption of information on the printed page was now open not only to those who were literate or semi-literate, but also to those who could not read at all. To these people, the image did not illustrate the story; it was the story in its entirety. And part of the "story" was the narrative of the strong white male. This image—white men representing achievement and control—along with images of war and colonialism, inundated the pages of *Harper's*. In the *National Police Gazette,* relentless repetition of the white male athlete soon seems to lose specificity of person, team, or location and to take on the iconic status of a political symbol or archetype. The *Gazette* ran illustrations of men who were most definitely out of control, too. Such images as

men being chased by police officers, getting caught with another man's wife, getting caught with a woman by his own wife, being spanked by women, being flogged by men, and otherwise going against the grain of hegemonic manliness were standard fare in the paper, but these images served to reinforce the images of the white males who were dominating their circumstances. This cultural location of the white male body as a sign of power grew increasingly prevalent over the next few decades. Eventually, this symbol became metonymic for racial, sexual, ethnic, and national supremacy.

The *Gazette*, which had been founded in 1845 as a crime reporter (including corruption and crimes by law enforcement officials), sex and scandal sheet, had declined during the Civil War. In 1866, it was sold, and the new publisher/editor, George W. Matsell, the supervisor of police who had come under attack from the previous management, added more illustrations and sensationalism. He added a theater column, and began to include sports coverage, including the prize ring. Unfortunately for Matsell, the daily newpapers provided more current (and more frequent) coverage of all sorts of news, and the *Gazette* once more had a hard go of it. Part of the problem was, ironically, the illustrations. Readers loved them, but woodcuts were expensive, and when readership declined, the illustrations no longer paid for themselves. In

fact, by the mid-seventies, Matsell had to transfer ownership of the paper to the engravers in order to pay for the woodcuts.

Another illustrated publication, *Harper's Weekly*, was no doubt even more instrumental in creating an image-expectant readership, if only because it reached a wider audience. Formally titled *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, the magazine was established in 1857 by the book publishing firm of Harper and Brothers, in New York. Fletcher Harper was the guiding light and mother hen of the periodical, even though he was never the titular editor. For nearly twenty years, he reviewed nearly everything that went into the publication, and yet was well respected and well liked by his colleagues, including the editors themselves. It was inaugurated as a family newspaper and presented a miscellany of material, including fiction and illustrations. By its second year of publication, Harper's had increased the proportion of illustrations to text, publishing some full-page as well as double-page images. Unlike the *Gazette*, whose bread and butter was crime and sexual scandals of anyone from the anonymous to the celebrated (Henry Ward Beecher was one of its favorite targets during the Beecher-Tilton scandal), the *Weekly* offered reportage and discussion of political events. The Harper Brothers were staunch Democrats and therefore the magazine took a conservative stance in the struggle between North and South. Harper hoped to be able to sidestep the issue of sectionalism

altogether, but of course, that was not possible in a news weekly. *Harper's* moved further toward the Union cause and by 1863 was an unequivocal Lincoln supporter. Harper hired artist Thomas Nast, whose merciless political cartoons soon became famous. He produced illustrations about the Civil War, too, which were not so much news as imaginative renderings of the emotional climate of the time. By the end of the decade, illustrations had taken over more space in the paper's pages, and the house built up its staff of artists (including talented woodcutters) and engravers to a truly exemplary force. Some of its artists were writers, too, and so produced entire articles and series.[47] Representations of men in *Harper's* took the form of illustrations of the text at this time. The time had not yet come for representations of men in order to display their bodies had not year arrived at this family magazine. Later, when the popularity of athletics demanded such images, *Harper's* included individuals and teams at their sports, but coverage of the prize ring was left to other venues.

Sports in the early nineteenth century in the United States were not organized and institutionalized into the types of team sports and spectator sports that developed later. Hunting, sailing, horse racing, cockfighting, dog fighting, rat-, bear-, and bull-baiting, rowing, and billiards dominated this kind of recreation. Horse races and boat races were popular across classes, and almost

[47] Mott, II, 469-77.

all of these sports maintained their edge of excitement because betting on the outcome framed the experience.[48] Boxing was little known, even though Tom Molineaux, an African American, went to England in 1810 to fight for the English championship, losing to Tom Crib. Boxing was an English sport and made a place for itself only gradually, with the arrival of English and Irish immigrant boxers. In *The Manly Art*, sports historian Elliott Gorn emphasizes that into the 1840s, prize fighting in the United States remained "a local phenomenon, largely ethnic, decidedly working-class and traditional in origins." Ethnicity was hugely important, thus "pugilism thrived where ethnic communities were largest." Boxing matches were settlements of personal, neighborhood, and ethnic hostilities; as such, they also were demonstrations of loyalties to one's own group.[49] Gorn also points out the role boxing played in "engendering a male aesthetic" with its displays of skills, courage, ability to take physical punishment, and its "fostering [of] a sense of national pride while countering effeminacy."[50]

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[48] Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (1993. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), esp. 47-97.

[49] Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 42, 46.

[50] Ibid, 27. Gorn gives thoughtful discussion to the ways in which boxing, class, ethnicity, and the social realities of the United States for many male immigrants promoted the growth of boxing. He argues that the types of work that many working class men could find was physically hard, monotonous, often highly regimented, and poorly paid. If young men had talent for fighting, they could gravitate easily to boxing for the sake of recreation and money. In addition, the culture of some immigrant neighborhoods fostered a vital, irresistible street life. Saloons were the open houses where men could socialize, form communities, and feel a sense of home, and street gangs, centering on the neighborhood saloon, attracted fighters. Politicians and street

Such fighters as "Yankee" Sullivan, Tom Hyer, were among the earliest celebrities. John Morrissey and John Heenan, the "Benicia Boy," were favorites in the fifties, and the match in April 1860, between Heenan and Tom Sayers, a London bricklayer, ended in a tie, with both men winning championship belts.[51] This match lasted two hours and twenty minutes, during which the men nearly killed each other. Sayers broke his arm in the sixth round of the forty-two round fight and thereafter concentrated on destroying Heenan's face, leaving him nearly blind. Nonetheless, the two toured England together that summer, giving exhibitions and Heenan returned to the United States a hero. Always the subject of condemnation, even by periodicals that covered the matches, boxing lost credibility among its fans during the sixties because of corruption, fight-fixing,

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fighters formed loyalties, as did men who worked in the same trade. Gorn says that boxers "embodied a distinctly working-class version of the American dream," seeking upward mobility within the confines of their situation (138), while at the same time mocking bourgeois values and living the deviant lives that the middle-class deplored. They flouted the Protestant ethic of hard work, abstemiousness, and saving money as well as its prescriptions for manhood: self-reliance, sole support of a family, self-control over emotions, temperance, and self-denial. Gorn argues also that proving heterosexual prowess was fundamental to the impetus for boxing, because maleness is "most emphatically confirmed in the company not of women, but of other men" (142). He recognizes the homoerotic element such an all-male world as boxing, as men found deep emotional satisfactions in participating in this world and in admiring each other's bodies. Newspaper accounts of matches bear this out: violent passions exploded at boxing matches, and descriptions of the fighters bodies' are couched in terms of beauty and attraction. Gorn argues that proving honor—that a man was deemed virile and was respected by other men—constituted a primary motivation for boxing. Gorn, *Manly Art,* Ch. 4, "The Meanings of Prize Fighting," 129-147.

[51] Despite middle- and upper-class pronouncements against the violence, brutality, animalism, violations of "respectable" mores, and illegality of boxing, emotional interest in the sports had a life of its own and often triumphed over moral condemnation. For example, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., the autocrat of the breakfast table for the *Atlantic Monthly* and a member of the

the centralization and organization of the urban political machine (which needed less neighborhood and polling place control local thugs), and the inclination of the crowds to disintegrate into anarchy and violence. Matches lost their interest, because so few of them were fought on a legitimate basis.[52] The sporting periodicals carried illustrations of the fights, as did *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, but the kind of explicit display of the white male body, flexing muscles and filling the entire illustration, was still in the future. Six months after the Heenan-Sayers fight, *Harper's* opened an editorial titled "Physical Training" by saying "The Homeric combat between Heenan and Sayers set all our youth a-dreaming about physical training." The next sentence, however, states that pugilism is "very far from being the best of a good exercise for the body, and that "other gymnastic sports" were better for developing muscles and promoting health and strength. Reference is made to "Dr. Winship" lifting "dumb-bells," and football, baseball, cricket, rowing, foot-races, and wrestling are recommended The brief piece ends by stating that schools, employers, and fathers must all support exercise, and then the physical education of "our people" will begin.[53]

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upper-class of Boston, reported in this column that he had "attended Heenan's prefight exhibitions and visited the Boy to measure his muscles." In Gorn, *Manly Art*, 149.

[52] Ibid, 108-128, 148-158, and 164-178.

[53] "Physical Training," *Harper's Weekly*, Sept. 22, 1860, 594.

Books about physical improvement and developing muscle and stamina were not subject to such constraints as *Harper's* to be suitable for a variety of interests and to be suitable for all readers. Those who were interested in exercise found available a large number of illustrated books to lead them in their regimens and techniques. Simon D. Kehoe's *The Indian Club Exercise*, published in 1866, is a case in point. Indian clubs, which had come to the attention of exercise educators in the United States via the British Army and its long occupation of India, concentrated the development of motion, strength, and control into the use of two clubs, with a grip at one end and additional weight incorporated into the other. The exerciser lifted and swung the clubs in prescribed patterns, which could be learned from an instructor and from books. Daniel Walker, who was English, had included such instruction in his exercise books published in the '30s. In the publisher's introduction, the reader is informed that Protestant missionaries and other travelers to India published reports of the "great muscular development and herculean strength" of Indian men who used this exercise. The British Army reported that the " 'exercise is one of the most effectual kinds of athletic training, known anywhere;' " the army had used the exercise since "shortly after the establishment of English colonies in India." (The introduction does not say when this was; typically, English history dates it to 1757, although the English had been in the process of taking over

Indian resources and trade since the sixteenth century.) Kehoe, who had been in the business of manufacturing and selling gymnastic equipment, traveled to Great Britain in 1861 and saw an exhibition with the clubs. When he returned to the United States, he got to work developing and manufacturing his own version. Use of the clubs is recommended to anyone who wants to improve his performances at crew, baseball, billiards, and boxing. It is also recommended to those who want to build their bodies to be more visually pleasing. The enhancement of sexual appeal and the importance of the image of a man's body to other men are of vital importance here. It was by such books as Kehoe's and other visual representations of muscular, agile white men that the post-bellum man learned the new, physical elements necessary to being manly. It is from such statements as the following that we may mark the cultural incursion of a purely physical manliness, much more akin to the term "masculinity" that came to be used very late in the century and gained popular usage early in the twentieth. A testimonial endorsing the clubs was published over the name of John Heenan, the celebrated boxer, and this was followed by an encouragement to "merchants, bankers, clerks, and those engaged in daily business pursuits" to take up the clubs. The reader is advised to look at and evaluate men's bodies: "note in the crowded thoroughfare of Broadway now and then an occasional passer-by, with well-knit and shapely form, firm and elastic step, broad-chested

and full-blooded, and you may mark him down as one of Kehoe's converts."[54] Kehoe notes that most of the new members of his gym are young men whose upper bodies were weak but "in a short time, however, the influence of the parallel bars, Indian Clubs, and dumb bells begins to show itself in the expansion of the chest, swelling of the muscles on the arms, breast, and loins, to their proper and natural development. The pads of the tailor are no longer needed, and the shoulders are squared with sinews and muscle. . . ."[55] Kehoe's book includes three images of exemplary specimens of male fitness shown topless, from the hip up, as well as several full-length, bare-chested male figures that demonstrate the exercises. Although until this time displays of naked male flesh were limited to exercise instruction, Kehoe's illustrations do more than merely show the reader how to exercise. These images show the *effects* of exercise on the male body. The illustrations of Timothy Dermody, "rare perfection," Charles A. Quitzow, whose "physique bears testimony . . . to the magic effects of using the Indian Clubs," and Frederick Kuner, "an example of proportional development, and…a model of manly form," serve no other purpose (fig. 1.4).[56] Their images reify the concept of white male strength and imprint that image on anyone who sees these pages.

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[54]Simon D. Kehoe, *The Indian Club Exercise* (New York: American News Company, 1866), 7-9.
[55]Ibid, 17.
[56]Ibid, 22-27.

This sort of rhetoric was already commonplace in verbal contexts. It is, however, one thing to read or to hear such abstract notions as "strong," "powerful," "big," "imposing," "intimidating" or to pore over statistics. It is quite another cognitive process to see, whether drawn or photographed, what one's culture means by those words and those numbers, what one is to recognize as embodiments of those abstractions. A person looking at an image that represents those adjectives as applied to human beings can instantly assess his or her own body within the context of other bodies. Visual information made it clear that the technologies of fitness were also the new technologies of hegemonic masculinity, and that demonstrating manhood now required the appearance of strength as well as performance of it. Fitness for the "white" man now meant not only health but, by implication, holding one's own in a physical fight and dominating any challenge, particularly one that could be construed as class or race-based. To be "white" referred to a set of characteristics that were in constant flux. To be a "man" referred to other characteristics, also unstable. Thus one's place within these kinds of categories can change from context to context as well as over time. A man's "manliness" depended on where he was situated with respect to other men, either in a small group, in a family, or in the larger culture. A person's whiteness depended on the ethnic and racial

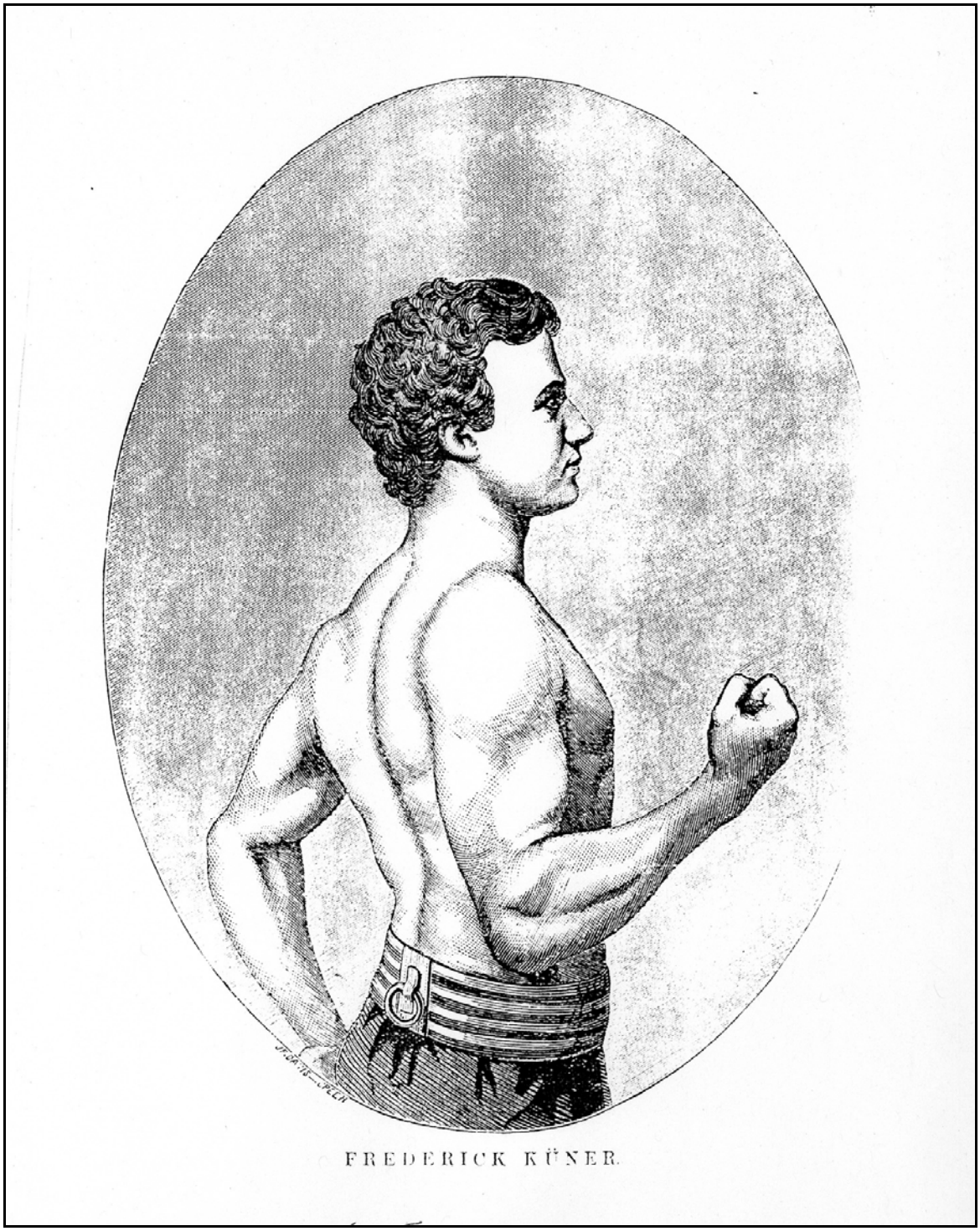

Fig. 1.4. "Frederick Küner," Sim. D. Kehoe, *The Indian Club Exercise* (New York: 1866), 27.

categories providing the similarities and the distinctions. As the definition of "whiteness" altered with social and political change, the image of the dominant race, class, and sex altered to meet new challenges.[57] "White" gave way to "Anglo-Saxon" or "Nordic" or "Anglo-Saxon-Nordic." The concept of class was open to infinite layering. The sexual categories of "man" and "woman", too, although idealized as distinct, existed on a continuum of representation and included sexual behaviors that, it was thought, could be inferred from image. Physical strength took on new importance as Anglo-Saxons, however that term might be defined (always by themselves) at any given moment and in a multitude of contexts, became a shrinking percentage of the populace. The philosophies of perfectibility were recycled, this time not via rhetoric of health alone but also in terms of size, strength, and visual impressiveness. The creation of this sort of awareness had begun with verbal rhetoric and a paradigm of masculinity that the listener or reader had to construct solely in the imagination,

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[57] For an excellent analysis of the changes in the definition of "white people" over the course of the nineteenth century, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1998). Jacobson argues that various groups of European immigrants were termed white according to the relation of demographics and politics. In the early days of the new republic, certain nationalities and ethnicities were called "white" as part of the formation of the nation. Later, these same ethnicities were not designated as "white," as a way to keep them excluded from cultural power and discourse. In the late twentieth century and its policies of affirmative action in education and employment for those who have been denied inclusion on the basis of being categorized as not "white," Jacobson argues that ethnic groups who in past decades have accepted and sought the designation "white" are now disavowing that label as a way to claim difference from "whiteness" and thereby avail themselves of increased privilege over those who

but at the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this rhetoric began the shift into one of visuality. The dominant Anglo-Saxon male now was beginning to be promoted via images of itself rather than as the "unseen" (but only to himself) difference from the African, Asian, Indian, Mexican, Native American, Slavic, Jewish, or Irish man or the female body of all ethnic and racial categories. Ethnology, physical anthropology, medicine, travelogues, cartoons, essayists, historians, reporters, had contributed to images that sealed in the popular media the stereotypes for all those groups. Nonetheless, it was by colonizing—the operation of taking control of resources that belong to others and controlling them, even to the extent that those resources become identified with usurper—the *representation* of those bodies that the image of the white male was able to insert itself into popular discourse. Underpinning the invention of the strong white male body was the image of all the other incarnations away from which white men defined themselves.[58] By an exercise of mental incorporation and physical imitation, the white male could take on the attributes of strength, agility, hardiness, belligerence, and desirability which he identified in bodies defined as different from how own and make those traits into characteristics of

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have historically been classified as other than white and denied opportunity on the basis of that exclusion.

[58] Abigail Solomon-Godeau discusses this psychological process in "Male Trouble," where she says that the "morphologies of idealized masculinity suggest a colonization of femininity, so that what has been rendered peripheral and marginal in the social and cultural realm, or actively

Anglo-Saxon male superiority. Desire to be like those others could not be acknowledged, but their desirability could be taken up and translated into terms that effected both possession and domination.

At the beginning of the period under study, it was usually Irish men that made it into the illustrated sporting press for the good reason that they constituted the majority of talented boxers, and then it was precisely to display those male bodies, almost always represented in action. Thus they were also in a state of undress, exposed from the waist up, clad in tight trunks below. Until athletics were made a part of college life, display of the disrobed professional athlete or burlesque performer in popular periodicals was, among other things, a marker of class. At the same time, however, the display of boxers, wrestlers, and other athletes denoted force, courage, and dominance. This interplay served the dialectical purpose of demeaning that body while also putting it up as the physical standard by which all men should measure themselves. Such images were feminized by the vulnerability of being, by Western European definitions, only partially clothed, thereby defining that body as politically subordinate.[59]

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devalued, is effectively incorporated within the compass of masculinity" (73). *Constructing Masculinity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 68-76.

[59]This phenomenon is cross-cultural and transhistorical, as may be seen in many images where nakedness denotes humiliation or at least subordination. See Michael Elvin, "Tales of Shin and Xin," *Fragments of a History of the Human Body*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), 272. Elvin points out that in an illustration titled Brine-lake Salterns from 1249, "the degree of nudity varies inversely with social status," with workers wearing only

Conversely, the semi-naked body of a fighter, either in sport or in war, a body that is intimidating and may serve as a challenge to weak, physically untrained upper and middle class men, was an image that asserted manliness, that is, it represented the physical attributes that had come to be standard requirements for being classified as a "man," with its implications of destructive power, domination over others, sexual performance, and heterosexuality. Thus representations of white males colonized working class and female bodies in two ways: the representations appropriated middle class beliefs about working class strength, size, "maleness," as well as the "feminine" element of display and erotic desirability. At the same time, these representations disavowed the actual possessors of these qualities and any identity with them, thus taking that which would enhance their image of power and enchantment while, by virtue of sex or ethnicity, maintaining a stance of intrinsic difference. Gender is implicit in this discourse: the female body was present by its absence; the male body defined itself as different from it in terms of strength, size, movement, comportment, prowess and agency while adopting its role as an object for visual consumption.

The underpinning that kept intact the dichotomies between female and male, black and white, elite and working class was an unshakeable belief that

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breechclouts, skilled laborers wearing leggings and tunics, and merchants and overseers covered by full-length robes.

some people were capable of civilization and others were not.[60] Further, whether or not one had the capacity to be civilized defined whether one was truly human. Those who defined civilization happened to have access to education and to the press: biologists, anthropologists, doctors, psychologists, journalists, and historians. They also came in the form—a body that had pale skin, specific facial features, visible muscle, and was male—that had the power and credibility to establish social structure and discourse, to which others responded. The dissenting voices—rights activists for African Americans and for women and fighters for labor interests in particular—to these discourses about white male superiority and entitlement were outdone by a building wave of faith in the reconstruction of the Anglo-Saxon male. The enthusiasm for the heroic, the virtuous, the civilized, moral and rational yet forceful, active, assertive, virile Anglo-Saxon male was had become the dominant cultural romance for many of those who controlled the media and for those who consumed its images. This self-defined most highly evolved product of human development was well on its way toward national policies of imperialism overseas and continued domination of peoples who were defined by the United States as not capable of self-government.

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[60] We will see vociferous evidence of this belief in contemporary sources in later chapters, in which issues of assimilation, annexation, colonialism, and imperialism are discussed. See also Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

Preludes to turn of the century foreign relations

There never was a time when the United States was not concerned with expansionism and foreign relations. Although this dissertation addresses U.S. expansionism and international relations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the only sense in which there was anything new at this time was in the sense that conflicts and negotiations pertained to lands and peoples who had not previously come under U.S. dominion. Since Congress had voted for independence in 1776 and officially made England a foreign country, and France had recognized the United States in 1778, and England had surrendered in 1781, the U.S. had been disposing of land beyond the thirteen states. The Land Ordinance of 1785, reworked as the Northwest Ordinance and passed in 1787, had organized and established procedures for states' cession of the land extending to the Mississippi River, north to the Great Lakes, and south to Spanish-controlled territory to within two hundred miles of the Gulf of Mexico. In 1795, Spain ceded an area between the Mississippi and Georgia that bought the U.S. border to fifty miles from the Gulf, and in 1819, it ceded what remained: Florida. Relations with France deteriorated in the late 1790s and were mended; in 1803 the U.S. and France effected the Louisiana Purchase. Tensions among England, France, and the U.S. led to Congress declaring war on England in 1812. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which through sheer force

effected the relocation of a number of foreign nations that occupied the Northwest Territory, the Ohio Valley, and the southeastern U.S. In 1823, the Monroe Doctrine was announced to Europe. One of the most important issues in foreign relations for the U.S. was with Mexico, with whom it had a conflicted relationship from the time U.S. immigrants took up residence in Mexico in the early 1820s and revolted against it in 1835. When the U.S. annexed the Republic of Texas in 1845 it took with it a huge swath of land that Mexico considered its own. This led to war in 1846 and Mexico's cession in 1848 of its territory from the Rio Grande to the Pacific Ocean and north to the 42nd parallel. During this time, the U.S. had been disputing with Great Britain as well, about the border of Maine and of the Oregon Country, arguments that were settled in 1842 and 1846, respectively.

In these various machinations, the U.S. had always to consider the peoples who lived in the newly acquired land and what to do with them in terms of management and where to draw lines of exclusion/inclusion into the national polity. The political and social placement of Native Americans and of peoples who had resided in areas that had been Mexico and were now part of the United States had to be shaped, established, and rationalized. The rhetoric about the capacity of various peoples to acquire and maintain civilization provided the foundation for debates and politics pertaining to foreign policy and international

relations. Debates returned endlessly to this issue, which was only the starting point for further discussions and conflicts about social and political proximity of those other peoples. A range of positions existed, from those calling for complete domination and control by the United States over other populations, to those who wanted domination and control but only temporarily until "they" could govern themselves, to those who rejected any sort of relationship other than an economic one with "them." This discourse had been brought from Europe with earliest colonizers in the form of mission-establishment and conversion-to-Christianity efforts. Enlightenment philosophies and theories had articulated the progression toward individualism, self-determination, and self-governance that had begun in the sixteenth century in Europe. This movement eventually enfolded countless institutions and cultural expressions; its arguments contained countless contradictions and produced tortuously argued paradoxes. The notion of the ability to govern oneself, and of a people to govern itself, presented the strongest proponents of such a vision with hugely disturbing and threatening logical conclusions. The doctrines of "natural rights," self-governance, equal rights were, their adherents thought, not only lovely concepts but absolutely vital to a healthy society and a life of dignity. It was true that the rhetoric always used the word "man," but it was well understood throughout the culture that "man" meant "human being." "Man" meant human as distinct from other

species, from forces of nature, from plants and minerals, and from any deity. In the late eighteenth century, fierce proponents of this doctrine defeated their autocratic rulers in order to put these ideas into practice. They devised a structure of government and wrote laws that applied their doctrine to a confederation of states and to individuals. The principles of rights and self-governance had appeared, prima facie, to apply universally. Logically, they had to. Ethically, they had to. But, as it turned out, they did not. In practice, the thinkers, writers, and devisers of the new nation applied these principles only to themselves and to others like themselves with respect to class, gender, and race. Thus, even though "man" meant human being, it did not really mean that at all in these ideas, in these documents, and in this government. However, to their consternation, the enforcers of the documents found that "men" of many kinds wanted those principles to apply to them. European immigrants without money or education wanted those rights. So did some of the (wo)men. So did African Americans. Some of these groups pointed out the egregious misapplication of these principles and laws, and they found out that in this case, "men" really meant men. It also meant white men, however whiteness was construed to best serve the interests of the elite. Members of these groups formed alliances in the hope of breaking the stronghold of the elite on rights that were supposed to be universal within the polity. Even some members of the elite found the

application of the laws indefensible and added their objections to the public discourse. Many found a disturbing contradiction between the principles and the way Europeans had dealt with the ways in which indigenous peoples had frustrated and thwarted the desires of the Europeans and their descendants. Others found the same contradiction in the exclusion of the mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of those who ordered society and legislated for them.

Those in charge, however, had their own alliances, which were much more powerful than the alliances of the unenfranchised. By the mid-nineteenth century, philosophers, clergy men, scientists, professors, medical doctors, and others had created a body of knowledge, much of it put forth as "factual," that so overwhelmed the claims to inclusion on the part of subordinate groups that the political structure seemed unassailable. In fact, it was not, but it gave way only creakingly and much later. The application of equal rights and opportunities is still a project in progress. Science, medical practice, and politics from its most personal to its largest practice corroborated one another and in some ways, pushed the status quo further into its own entrenchments. Political control by others, the very issue that had proved intolerable to England's colonists, was still the issue. Now, however, it was the issue of the political control *of* others. In the mid-nineteenth century, this side of the dynamic began to extend into the relations of the United States with peoples who lived overseas and in Central

and South America. Some discussants had asserted that the questionable populations—African Americans, Native Americans, all women—had the right to participation in government, while others who opposed such involvement did so from fear of the effects of assimilation and of the effects of the franchise. Imagining the power of annexed populations, residents of territories, emancipated slaves, the women in their own homes and families—the whole colonial incubus—having the power to elect representatives to Congress was presented in the press as either ridiculous or the death knell of Anglo-Saxon civilization, or both.

Moreover, resistance to usurpation was not confined to its potential within the (so far, ever-changing) borders of the United States. The hostile attitudes of Britain, France, and Spain during the Civil War had created a response of protectionism among many in the United States. After the war, the ensuring the capacity to prevent invasion by European powers seemed to be a good idea to a number of citizens, some of whom were in the State Department, the Cabinet, and the presidential office. European nations that had long had economic interests in the Caribbean Islands sought to prevent the United States from establishing conflicting interests there. However, to some, the Caribbean islands looked more enticing than ever, and so the Danish West Indies, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti were scouted as possibilities. Gaining offshore

control, it was argued, would provide more commodities for commerce and more consumers, and would have provide extension of protection against European aggression. U.S. explorations into the markets of the Caribbean made relations with Britain worse than they already were (not least because of anti-British Charles Sumner's demands for war reparations).[61]That year, Secretary of State Hamilton Fish succeeded in negotiating the Treaty of Washington with Great Britain to resolve the reparations issue and other conflicts, which led to improved relations between the two nations.) Secretary of State William H. Seward (1861-69), who had made his life's purpose the expansion of the United States, wanted an empire that extended into Latin America and the Pacific. He pursued the annexation of the Midway Islands in 1867, which Congress effected, and in the same year he made a treaty with Russia for the purchase of Alaska. President Grant (1869-77) was an expansionist also, and he and his Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, looked into the possibility of annexing the Dominican Republic. In 1869, Grant sent Gen. Orville Babcock to the republic, where Babcock signed two treaties, one for annexation and the other, should annexation be blocked, for the purchase of Sámana Bay, to be used as a coaling station by the U.S. Navy. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee rejected the annexation treaty, as did the full Senate in a later vote. In addition, U.S. relations with Spain

[61] In 1871, when Sumner denounced President Grant's measures to annex Santo Domingo, he

were volatile at this time because of the Ten Years War, a protracted chapter in Cuba's fight for Independence from Spain. Despite popular opinion, Fish, with great difficulty, persuaded Grant not to recognize the belligerency of Cuba.

International relations were much worse within the continental United States than they were with peoples overseas. In 1864, the Cheyenne had asked for a peace agreement with the territorial government. Military personnel had advised them to camp at Sand Creek in Colorado to wait for the governor's decision. The Colorado militia led by Col. John Chivington attacked the encampment of seven hundred Native Americans, most of them women and children, and mutilated and killed hundreds of them. Relations were no better with the Sioux. In 1865, Sioux declared war against U.S., and the fighting went on for two years. Miners had encroached on their land in Montana and agents would not enforce restrictions against them. Furthermore, the U.S. government publicized plans for a route called the Bozeman Trail through Sioux hunting grounds. When Capt. William Fetterman, who was leading a supply escort along the trail, decided to leave the trail, his men were ambushed and eliminated by the Sioux. Debate among whites about how to conduct international relations with these peoples gravitated to two camps: control via education and civilization, or control via military force and punishment. The pro-educationists

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effected his own removal as chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1871.

prevailed in Congress. The solution was territorial confinement and restriction of resources. In order to isolate Native American nations from each other, the small reservation concept was adopted. With limited territory, mobility, and land, Native Americans would be subject to organization and supervision and then could be taught how to farm and how to transform themselves into beings who could be accepted into civilized society. The United States government split the Plains peoples into two groups and relocated one group to the Black Hills of Dakota Territory and the other to what is now Oklahoma, both areas that whites had rejected for settlement and that were far, far away from existing white settlements.

Another population control and protection problem for the U.S. government involved the enormous population of African-Americans *vis a vis* the European-Americans. The abolition of slavery and the end of the Civil War brought the measures of reconstruction of the South, new political arrangements and agreements between North and South, and completely altered economic system. The millions of African Americans were no longer property; they were now "free" of the abomination of slavery. This shift in their legal status did not alter their economic, educational, material, or political situation, however. Millions of people, with no property, no resources other than their own bodies, no education, no medical care, no institutional support, no civil rights, and no

place of safety were in a state of free fall, left without the means or protection with which to begin a new way of life and with the rage of a dominant society that could no longer claim legal ownership of their bodies but could control and make a hell of their psychic and physical realities nonetheless. The war between the states was officially over, but what were tantamount to international relations with respect to that conflict still took place in Congress. The North and the South continued to maintain individual and antagonistic identities, the North negotiating for control and the South for resistance. For African Americans, life continued in what amounted to a terrorist state. White people (distinctions of Anglo-Saxon ancestry disappeared in this context) committed hideous crimes against persons who were now legally "free," but no consequences were forthcoming from the state authorities. Terrorism designed to control, punish, and drive out African Americans were overlooked at best and often commended in the press. African Americans had no recourse to police protection, legal assistance, or state institutions. Often, the state authorities of a given town were also its terrorists.

In 1865, the states ratified the Thirteenth Amendment, which made slavery and involuntary servitude illegal in the U.S. and in places over which the nation has jurisdiction "except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." An amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of

the states in order to be added to the Constitution. Ratification was made possible because, for the secessionist states, readmission to the Union was contingent upon ratifying the amendment. In 1866, the Ku Klux Klan organized in Tennessee and new cells formed across the South and in the Midwest soon after. In 1868, the states ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, which prohibited states from making or enforcing laws that abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States. States could neither "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified, making unconstitutional the denial "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" of the right of "citizens" (meaning men) to vote. However, it made, no provision for enforcing and protecting that right except to state "The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." Related legislation soon followed. In 1870-71, Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Acts to protect the voting rights of African Americans.

Subverting the efforts to foster opportunity, agency, and a voice in federal and state policy for African Americans was not limited to the rarified rhetoric of politicians, anthropologists, educators, doctors, and social theorists. The rapidly expanding universe of fitness, athletics, and sports for white people, and the technologies of the media, which transmitted into public discourse mainstream

ideas, values, "knowledge," and beliefs, communicated the discourse of the experts to the masses—the public—where it could be heard, discussed, interpreted, debated, and acted upon in the creation of culture. As Congress enacted laws to redress imbalances of legal and official political power, the press and the public created a sports industry, a recreational and leisure-activity industry, an image industry, effected its own priorities. Not that "the public" was monolithic, or that each evolutionary, political, and social discourse did not contain its own contradictions. Interests and values were constantly in conflict; power struggles and social positioning created a continual division, synthesis, and alteration of society. As we move into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the idealized imago of white male strength and dominance were implicit in discourses that seemed to have nothing to do with white men's bodies. The middle and upper classes had responded unintentionally with an overwhelming "yes" to the cultural role of sports in schools when, in 1857, it had made Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days* the best selling book of the year.[62] In the United States, baseball had captured the heart of sports enthusiasts, and the 1859 Williams-Amherst baseball game began intercollegiate competition in that sport. College baseball was hugely popular, largely because of the

[62] Consumers who had made *Tom Brown's School Days* a best selling book wanted to know more about this boy who embodied and enacted all the qualities of fortitude, honor, honesty,

interest of the public in professional ball clubs. In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings toured the country as the first professional baseball team. Baseball became America's most beloved sport. Seamen on tours of duty missed playing it so much that it became a regular part of shore leave, and matches were played between the crews of cruisers and battle ships.[63] Rowing was a major sport and received generous press coverage. In 1852, Harvard and Yale held the first intercollegiate regatta, and from then until the turn of the century, crew was the most popular intercollegiate sport. In 1868, the New York Athletic Club was formed, and Robert R. McBurney opened New York's 23rd Street YMCA in 1869. Also in 1869, the first intercollegiate football game (which was actually a fifty-player soccer match) between Princeton and Rutgers started a tradition of intense rivalry among Ivy League colleges that burst the barricades that had restrained the interest in college football. The debates about sports in college, and about football in particular, continued until the end of the century—for some of its opponents, beyond—but the outcome was inevitable. When Princeton and Rutgers played each other, they opened a door that could not be closed again. College football was here to stay.

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responsibility, industry, intelligence, courage, pluck, sand, grit, and athleticism. Accordingly, Hughes wrote *Tom Brown at Oxford*, which was one of the best sellers in the United States in 1861.
[63] Betts, 100-103, and Gorn and Goldstein, 88-89.

Although only distant relatives to hear the analysts of college sports tell it, the two worlds of sports—amateur and professional—were actually closely intertwined. Professional pugilism was called "boxing." Amateur pugilism was called "sparring." Men who would not have dreamed of entering the world of pro boxing, as either contender or spectator, avidly awaited the news of which contestant had won and how the fight had gone. Recognition that the paid athlete often provides the template for the amateur was evidenced in 1860 when Harper's Weekly published an unsigned article which began by stating that "the Homeric combat between Heenan and Sayers set all our youth a-dreaming about physical training."[64] The article goes on to state that "pugilism" is probably not the best exercise and that other sports were better for developing muscles and for promoting health and strength, citing strong man and physician George Windship's regimen of lifting as a way to gain strength and cure disease. The discourse beneath the surface, however, and not very far beneath, was one of elevating the middle-class white male to a position of unambiguous dominance over everyone who was not a middle-class white male. The article goes on to say that from "neglect of muscular development, our race [the "American people"] is deteriorating, especially in the large cities. No one who compares the young men of New York and Boston with foreigners of the same age can deny the truth

[64]"Physical Training," *Harper's Weekly*, September 22, 1860, 594.

of the statement."[65] That the importance of physical fitness was restricted by gender as well as by class, ethnicity, and race is implicit throughout this short piece, most obviously in the last paragraph, which reminds readers that "fathers must see to it that their children become proficients [sic] in such boyish games as acquire strength and agility. When this is the case, we may believe that the physical education of our people has begun."[66] As this *Harper's* editor knows, instruction in gender and racial identity begins with our earliest experiences, as does all identity instruction. "Boyish games" were just one more teaching technique to be added to the curriculum. The gender and race prescriptions are obvious in this passage, and the admonishments about ethnicity, nationality, and the incipient aesthetic of masculine muscularity are unmistakable. When the author says that the contrast between "young men of New York and Boston with foreigners of the same age" is proof that "our race" is deteriorating, the message warns that young white men must be ready to prove themselves as men in international contests with other young white men. The statement is made on the basis of the *appearance* of the young men of New York and Boston. Proof of manhood may be had only as a result of "muscular development," which must be discernible by means of visual presentation. The importance of an image of physical ability and power to the credibility of a man's "manliness," the

[65]Ibid.

affirmation of virility among men as an act of visual consumption, continued to strengthen its grip on the cultural imagination and confirmed the increasing popular support for the United States as a contender in the ring of imperialism.

[66]Ibid.

Chapter Two
After the Civil War:
Reconstructing the Male Body in the Popular Press

Two medically oriented works published in 1869 illuminate beautifully the gender anxieties of the post-Civil-War years. One was the United States Sanitary Commission's study of the Union Army; the other was George M. Beard's "Neurasthenia, or Nervous Exhaustion." Both of these publications expressed pride in the male descendants of Celtic-Anglo-Saxon-Nordic-Teutonic forebears and terror that those same descendants were physically deteriorating and would soon be under the domination of other, more stalwart, "races."[1] Fitness enthusiasts and physical culture experts used Benjamin Apthorp Gould's Commission study as a benchmark and proof of white male superiority, and the study furthered the general enthusiasm for measuring and tracking the male human body. However, eventually the study was employed as proof of the need for improvement in physical excellence. The Commission's statistics, which within the context of the study were interpreted to reiterate the extant racial

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[1]Benjamin Apthorp Gould. *United States Sanitary Commission, Sanitary Memoirs of the War of the Rebellion, Investigations of the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers*. (New York: Hurd and Houghton for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, 1869). Gould was a member of the National Academy of Sciences and president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. George M. Beard, "Neurasthenia, or Nervous Exhaustion," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 80 (1869), 245-59. In 1880, Beard published a greatly expanded treatment of this article

hierarchies, soon paled in comparison with the measurements of boxers, strength trainers, athletes from England, and gymnasts from Germany. At the same time, the medical-cultural phenomena of neurasthenia and hysteria helped to convince the upper-middle class that the Anglo-Saxon population was on a decline because of too much "brain work" and confinement indoors. Beard attributed the nervous disorder, diagnosed as a depletion of nervous energy, "nervous exhaustion," to "modern civilization." Beard's diagnosis, however, contained within it the assurance that the physical and emotional enervation that the upper classes were experiencing were ultimately nothing to worry about, because this was in fact a successful adaptation to the inevitable course of civilization. These two cultural perceptions—that Anglo-Saxon men and their "like" (an always changing category, contingent on the relation of racial difference being asserted at a given moment) are physically superior *and* that they are suffering from neurasthenia, on the verge of collapse—seemingly at odds with each other, were actually the hand and the glove, a perfect fit. The spectre of physical inadequacy and the consequent subordination of white males contributed to the launch of an assault on the potential reality of that spectre. The juxtaposition of racist and sexist arrogance with the dread of the withering of the Anglo-Saxon population ignited in the 1870s an interest in athletic contests, both professional and

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with his book, *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia): Its Symptoms, Nature, and*

collegial. The *National Police Gazette* devoted more coverage to sports than in the past, and *Harper's* and *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* increased their illustrations of the male body via athletics and other topics. Even the staid and irreproachable *Scribner's Monthly* contributed to the display of male bodies with such articles as "The Art Schools of Philadelphia (with illustrations by the pupils)." "Art Schools" created a context for illustrating the casts from ancient sculptures, the male life-drawing class with a naked male model, the women's life class with a naked female model, and the anatomy class, which included a male model stripped to the waist. *The National Police Gazette* expanded the realm of professional sport, composed of (with few exceptions) unschooled, working-class men, usually Irish, who boxed and wrestled, walked and ran, for a purse. It is not surprising that men who were stigmatized for ethnicity and national origin gravitated to boxing, for only a man who had another source of money could afford to be an amateur athlete; only a man who could use his fists and had few other options (and those, less lucrative), would choose the professional boxing ring for his livelihood.

This chapter explores the how the *Police Gazette, Harper's, Scribner's Monthly,* and a number of books about exercise and strength training increased

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Sequences, Treatment (New York: Wood, 1880).

and legitimated the presence of the white male body in mainstream culture.[2] These issues presented themselves in all of the publications under analysis, and even though most readers would not have been consumers of all the publications (although some would have read all of them), the ideologies of class, gender, and race would not have differed substantially among them. The huge middle class (this category changes, too, depending on one's viewing point) was relaxing its strictures about agonistic performance as sport and as entertainment and was being tempered to accept the entrenchment of images of athletes to illustrate, and in many instances, supplant, the textual reportage. As a way to resolve the tension inherent in the contradiction between believing that manhood was biological and yet seeing that it was subject to discrediting, that it was in fact not conferred by biology but rather was enacted, many readers found reassurance in periodicals that offered images of strong white males. The 1870s saw the emergence of the white male body as the celebrity in a variety of contexts and publications as the middle and upper classes sought assurances of race, gender, and class security. Images of white male dominance helped to give that security.

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[2] Images from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (a weekly) and his *Popular Monthly* are useful as well, because they help to illustrate issues of class, gender, and race that underlay contemporary ideologies of social structure. *Leslie's Newspaper* was similar to *Harper's* and its audiences would have been much the same as *Harper's*. Because of this similarity, I chose to review only *Harper's* for the full period of this study. Frank Mott esteems *Harper's* as "of distinctly higher quality than *Leslie's*," because it was "better edited and better printed." Mott, *A History of American Magazines 1850-1865*, V. II (1938. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 44, 45.

The 1870s presented upheaval on a number of fronts. Reconstruction of the South was in force for most of the decade, a policy that created a sharpening of white racism as abolitionism became fact and the issues of civil rights and integration/segregation formed the new battleground. One of the consequences of Reconstruction was the formation of the southern "Redeemers," a movement by powerful whites to restore by policy, state law, and force the antebellum racial and political order. Terrorism of African-Americans rose, and whites increased the practice of lynching as a way to ensure control of the new "citizens." Congress passed the Force Acts of 1870 and 1871 to protect the voting rights of black Americans from Ku Klux Klan terrorism. Meanwhile, President Andrew Johnson was working hard to restore former secessionists to Congress and to ensure the good health of the social codes of discrimination and segregation. Southern state legislatures passed laws dubbed "Black Codes," which regulated and restricted the freedom of former slaves, including vagrancy and apprenticeship laws that forced employment and dictated for whom the former slaves would work. The Black Codes also saw to it that African-Americans were kept propertyless, without full political and legal rights.[3] White males who had become hysterical about incipient black male power were determined to keep

[3]For histories of the Reconstruction era, see Kenneth Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Knopf, 1965); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

that power contained through any means necessary, including brute force rationalized by a self-serving moral high road. They cited the preservation of "civilization," the preservation of women's (i.e., men's) honor, and the restoration of complete control to those (white males) who were capable of governance.[4] This political climate was helped along by the outcome of the Hayes-Tilden presidential contest of 1876, in which the contested election was decided in favor of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes after a bargain was struck between Republicans and Democrats in the House of Representatives. This negotiation resulted in the withdrawal of federal troops from the South and the restoration of Southern home rule in exchange for the Democrats agreeing to abandon plans for a filibuster, which would have thrown the election of the president to the House, which was under Democratic control. By this bargain the Democrats recovered power over their geographical and social territory. In this way, the Republican Party carried the presidency, but that president contended with a Democratic House for four years and a Democratic Senate for two. Nonetheless, Hayes did nothing to enforce the laws and amendments that had already been passed when he came to office.[5]

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[4] Although white Southern men committed the vast majority of lynchings, white Northern men were responsible for a number of them as well.

[5] George Sinkler, *The Racial Attitudes of American Presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), 187-188.

Adding to the fire was the publication in 1871 of Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, which detailed the analogous structures and functions in *Homo sapiens* and other animal species. This coincided with and helped to spread the obsession in physical anthropology (which was used to create distinctions of race and sex), natural science, and medicine with anthropometry (the physical measurement of human beings), the purpose being to generalize about humanity on the basis of race and sex. The generalizations were then used to construct hierarchies of evolution and ability. The *Descent of Man* created discomfort in the ruling class (here meaning elite whites), which now had to confront and devise ways to explain (away) similarities between itself and other "kinds" of human beings and with other animals in general.[6] The need for psychological and political self-preservation triumphed, and it was not long before an accommodationist explanation emerged which linked whites into the chain of existence while using Darwin's descriptions to place African-Americans earlier in evolutionary history, despite their presence in the here and now, living right

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[6] In *Rough Rider in the White House*, Sarah Watts discusses in detail the horror that Theodore Roosevelt and many of his peers experienced at the thought of evolutionary continuity among primates. See Watts, *Rough Rider in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Desire*, Chapter Three "Women, Apes, and Baneful Things," (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2003), 79-122. She states that Roosevelt adopted a Lamarckian system of beliefs about evolution, holding that if a man trained his body to be a fighting machine, the qualities developed as a result of training would be passed on genetically to his offspring. This was consistent with a major strain of social theory of the time, which held also that racial and ethnic ancestry was the explanation of European and American history. See Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, 4 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

alongside whites. Somehow, it seemed, everyone except the white people had become caught in a time warp, and had failed to evolve over the aeons, both mentally and physically. Many means were used in this resistance, including ridicule of Darwin and of minorities. *Harper's Weekly*, for example, ran hundreds of cartoons in the following decades that denigrated various populations, particularly the African American, the Chinese, and the Irish. Other publications took other approaches. In 1861, abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson had detailed the differences between barbaric and civilized nations, another treatise added to the pile of such arguments placing the white elite culture in the United States at the pinnacle of life, resting on racist explanations of political and social difference.[7] As we saw in the previous chapter, racist explanations had been accredited by the bad science of the Sanitary Commission, bolstering science's history of creating mental, moral, and political meaning from catalogued physical differences, including differences in brain size allegedly found during autopsies. By this time, "scientific" racist explanations for the status quo had nearly unquestioned credibility, which gave solid support for the continuation of racist scientific policies and methods. Physical and intellectual evolution were

[7]Darwin could also be used for sexist discrimination, if one so chose. In drawing similarities between humans and other animals, Darwin stated, "Man differs from woman in size, bodily strength, hairiness, &c., as well as in mind, in the same manner as do the two sexes of many mammals." Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of*

defined by a coterie of white males called scientists; not surprisingly, the most advanced form of evolution matched the descriptions and performances of white males, performances which were made possible by their social position, which had been made possible by preceding generations of white males. Thus evolutionary theory was self-fulfilling, much as the "theories" of D. H. Jacques had equated beauty and civilization with how the “best” specimens of the white race look.

Certainly, the Civil War and the Sanitary Commission had reinforced a racist national ideology of white superiority. However, other post-war events added to the stress on middle-class men to reinforce their cultural position. Ironically, in 1873, only four years after the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory, Utah, the United States experienced its share of a devastating international economic depression, most famously in the nationwide railroad strike of 1877. The depression of 1873 was the consequence hugely successful industrialism and its attendant overproduction. In the United States, this involved the collapse of the railroad industry, which had overbuilt its routes without consideration of consumer support, and land speculation. As a result, the world of business was strewn with collapsed ventures, bankruptcies, and the subsequent bank failures. The promise of prosperity by farming that had sent

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Favored Races in the Struggle for Life, and *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New

thousands west slowed temporarily because of the depression, but revived with continued improvements in farm machinery. The Grange, formed in 1867, provided otherwise isolated farm families with a way to have community and to organize social activities. The Grange movement, begun by farmers as a defense against financial ruin, also established and consolidated facilities for crops and commerce and offered insurance policies for farmers. The Farmers' Alliance, established as a political organization to give farmers a unified voice in state and federal policies, grew, splintered, and spawned new but similar groups. Many industrial workers felt the tightening of industry's belt as well; when in 1877 the Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Ohio, and other railroads cut workers' wages, a general strike ensued. The B&O cut wages ten percent and the strike spread to Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and San Francisco. Workers walked off the job and across the country. Railroad workers had the support of local businesses, farmers, clergy, and politicians as well as of workers in other industries. Alan Trachtenberg cites the spread and ferocity of the rebellion as the cause of "fears of a new civil war."[8] As the strike became violent, companies hired police and militia to protect property, and battles ensued. President Hayes allied his forces with the railroad corporations and ordered federal troops out to protect the

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York: The Modern Library, Random House, n.d.,) 598.

[8] Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 40.

interests of business owners. State officials lent their cooperation to the president and to the military retaliation against the strikers; more than one hundred had died when the strikers finally folded.[9] The rise and subjugation of labor resulted in more stringent measures and heightened middle and upper class feelings against labor unions.[10] The bourgeoisie and native laborers targeted immigrants with economic and ethnic tensions; some feared for their jobs and others for their social position. The fears of the "insiders" obscured the recognition that open land, industrialization, opportunity, and "progress"—the attributes of which they were so proud—had created the very conditions that had brought the immigrants (and their own, often quite recent, ancestors) to the United States in the first place.

Women, too, were becoming more vocal and more visible as a political force, some of them the same women who deplored the labor struggles. A small but determined force was pressing for admission to higher education and for entry into the legal and medical professions. In 1873 the Association for the Advancement of Women was formed as a focus and support for women who wanted to enter professions; 1874, in Cleveland, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was formed. The WCTU worked towards women's suffrage by educating them about the importance of having a public voice in

[9] Ibid.

order to protect their homes from liquor and other vices. Frances Willard, a former teacher and dean of the Women's College of Northwestern University, was instrumental in directing the Union towards this goal. She began with advocacy of liquor-law reforms that conservative women would want to support and thus drew women into political advocacy and public life through an agenda of family protection.[11]

The pressures that threatened to reshape the power distributions, although not new, were squeezing harder. The sacrosanct ideals of democracy, citizenship, and civil rights by which white males had given themselves ascendancy in North America in the first place now threatened to be their undoing, or at least their comeuppance. The women joining the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and those joining labor unions were not the only women who wanted a better life and a voice that counted. Women, many of them the social counterparts of the elite white males, were pressuring colleges and universities and state legislatures for admission until, here and there, the

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[10] Ibid, 40, 41.

[11]Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle, The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1959, 1975), 186-189. Eventually, the union was divided into those focused on temperance and those focused on suffrage. Suffrage took the back seat as the century progressed, but as had been seen with earlier abolitionist activism, nothing could reverse the experience and history of white women becoming organized and politically active in their own behalf. Unfortunately, segregation defined these organizations as much as did the political agendas. African-American women formed their own organizations to further their own ends, which often were quite dissimilar from those of whites.

resistance backed down. Oberlin College had opened in 1833 without requirements with respect to race and sex, and Antioch College had opened in 1853, admitting men and women. Mount Holyoke opened as a seminary for women in 1837, although it was not officially a college until 1893. The first state university to admit women was Iowa in 1858, and Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio opened to women in 1870. Boston University had opened its gates to women in 1869, and by 1875, Cornell had admitted women and Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley had opened. Women were increasing their presence in the professions of law and medicine as well, earning degrees and practicing professionally, although with restrictions, official as well as unofficial.[12] Women had been active in other areas as well. The push for suffrage had taken on energy since the development and passage of the Fifteenth Amendment; women had been voting in the Territory of Wyoming since 1870, and other areas "out West" soon followed. During the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia, Susan B. Anthony, seeing an empty bandstand in Independence Square, instantly took the opportunity to read a Declaration of Rights for Women.[13]

Agitation for women's rights was not limited to battles for higher education and suffrage. Women had been active also in lobbying for labor reform. The Lowell Female Labor Reform Association had organized textile

[12] For more discussion about women in education, see Flexner, 115-33.

workers in 1845-46, and the Laundry Workers Union in Troy, New York, fought for wage increases from 1863 until 1869, when the union collapsed. Female shoemakers in Lynn, Massachusetts had struck for higher wages in 1869, and the ensuing union movement among female shoemakers spread to New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, parts of the Midwest, and California, naming its national organization the Daughters of St. Crispin. It lasted until the mid-1870s, ultimately killed by the depression of 1873. Other workers as well had been forming protective organizations and labor unions since before the Civil War. Working Woman's Associations assisted wage-earning women regardless of trade. Over the next fifteen years, some men's labor unions opened to women as more women entered trades, most notably cigar-making and printing, and women formed their own trade organizations as well. The men's labor unions, while accepting women as members, did not support women's claims to pay equal to that of men. However, the barrier to women's membership in national labor unions had been broken through, and it would not be long before women would be organizing for labor rights again. Women in manufacturing and service industries fought for better wages, and in 1881 the Knights of Labor began organizing men and women on an equal basis.[14]

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[13]Ibid, 174-75.
[14]Flexner, 134-144.

Despite these social changes, the tremors were still too weak to shake the grip of the white patriarchy. The struggle for civil rights for African-American males, the woman's suffrage movement and the larger woman's rights movement, and the labor movement, would have had a difficult enough time if they had worked in concert, but they did not, and in fact, often worked against one another. Suffrage had been expanded, but not to women. Adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment alienated woman's rights activists from one another. Some women were satisfied with that much progress for the time being. Others were interested in gaining rights and opportunities for women but did not want woman suffrage, and still others were deeply offended by the passage of an amendment for which they had worked that perpetuated their exclusion from voting. This dilution of women's political voices strengthened the position of elite white men, as did the division of the working-class between native born white and new immigrant, between men and women, between native born white and African American, between agrarian and industrial labor. These coalitions and potential coalitions split under the greater force of gender roles, ethnicity, race, region, and occupational unity. Labor unions disavowed African Americans during a time when jobs were scarce, wages were low, and violence was only a look or a word away. The black migration from the South into northern industrial cities created a situation similar to the one that many white laborers

themselves had faced: black men were willing to work for lower wages and endure a lower standard of living in preference to no wages at all. This, too, had the effect of creating class separatism and exacerbating racism. African-American men fought to act on the hard-won rights they had so recently gained, their efforts becoming more futile as the Klan and the Redeemers took back the southern states for white male rule. Some white women abandoned the rhetoric of universal suffrage in favor of arguments for their alliance with "civilization" and the white male, thinking that that tactic would have greater appeal to those in control. However, it was white men—male laborers against a cadre of male strikebreakers, managers, and owners—who played out the high drama of employment conflict and violence.[15] Everyone else's interests were sidelined. Ironically, one of the major causes of labor rebellion—the expropriation of wages by machines—against the control of the owners was also one of the major contributors to the imaginary of the human body itself as a machine: controllable, predictable, endlessly improvable, and symmetrical.[16]

Aside from the *Police Gazette* and other such publications as crime reporters and sporting papers, and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, which

[15] The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor was founded in Philadelphia in 1869, and the Socialist Labor Party was founded there in July 1876, following the relocation of Karl Marx's International Workingmen's Association from London to New York in 1872.

defined itself as respectable rather than as sensational, the male body remained encoded in text during much of the 1870s. The message of white male power was couched in terms of Darwin's ideas, of Spencer's application of Darwin's ideas to human social hierarchies, of racist distinctions, of sexist distinctions, of distinctions between non-English speaking immigrants and nativist priorities, and of the "science" of anthropology. Bodies, both female and male, were explicitly addressed in the rhetoric of race and evolution as well as in that of physical culture, medicine, and anthropology. Bodies were also addressed, often covertly, in rhetoric of sport, achievement, dominance, leadership, professionalism, and international relations. The bodies in those realms were always white, always male, always middle-to-upper class. Male bodies were presented as illustrations of news reportage for the most part: wars, state affairs, public ceremonies, crimes, or in portraiture of famous men. Although the male body is "presented" in illustrations of men regardless of the extent to which that body is covered, it was in the late 1870s that the contemporary male body was presented overtly in the mainstream press as an object for pleasurable viewing. By the mid-seventies, illustrations of the male body were commonplace in the illustrated periodical press, but unless the bodies were engaged in athletics, the

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[16] See Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992). See also Carolyn Thomas de la Peña, *The Body Electric: How Strange Machines Built the Modern American* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2003).

bodies were fully clothed. The exception to this practice occurred when the editor chose to illustrate a text by using representations of ancient Greek or Roman decoration or statuary. In these cases, of course, the male body appeared naked. Thus the unclothed, well-muscled male made its appearance in books and periodicals of the time under the protective guise of art, history, and athletics.

In the 1870s, such texts as Guillaume Depping's *Wonders of Bodily Strength and Skill*, Ed. James's *Practical Training for Running, Walking, Rowing, Wrestling, Boxing, Jumping and All Kinds of Athletic Feats* and his *How to Acquire Health, Strength, and Muscle*, and William Blaikie's *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So* and the like whetted interest in the white male body.[17] This was a departure from previous physical culture literature, which had dealt with diet, bathing, calisthenics, fresh air, and sleep more than it had with endurance exercise, sport, and size. In 1879 George Beard published "The Physical Future of the American People,"[18] which addressed the character of peoples and nations, and in his famous *American Nervousness* (1881) (the sequel to *A Practical Treatise on Nervous*

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[17] Guillaume Depping, *Wonders of Bodily Strength and Skill in All Ages and All Countries*. Trans. Charles Russell (London, Paris, and New York: Cassell Petter & Galpin, n.d. New York: Scribner, 1871). Ed. James, *Practical Training for Running, Walking, Rowing, Wrestling, Boxing, Jumping and All Kinds of Athletic Feats; . . .* (New York: Ed. James, 1877). Ed. James, *How to Acquire Health, Strength and Muscle; including Treatment for Free Livers and Sedentary People*, (New York: Ed. James, 1878, 12fth ed.), William Blaikie, *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879, 1884. London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1899).

Exhaustion (1880)), he emphasized the signs and causes of American nervousness and the longevity of brain workers. The last chapter of *Nervousness* is an expansion of his "Physical Future" article. This chapter begins with Beard's prediction of an increase in neuroses over the next fifty years or so, when such disorders will be more "numerous and more heterogenous than at present. But side by side with these are already developing signs of improved health and vigor that cannot be mistaken; . . . the evolution of health, and the evolution of nervousness, shall go on side by side."[19] Beard identifies a "recent improvement in the American physique," noting that

> during the last two decades, the well-to-do classes of America have been visibly growing stronger, fuller, healthier. We weigh more than our fathers; the women in all our great centres of population are yearly becoming more plump and more beautiful; and in the leading brain-working occupations our men also are acquiring robustness, amplitude, quantity of being. On all sides there is a visible reversion to the better physical appearance of our English and German ancestors . . .the next generation, as the experience of the late war gives us reason to hope, may equal our European ancestors in strength, solidity, and endurance, as our women have long surpassed them in personal attractiveness and beauty.[20]

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[18]George Beard, "The Physical Future of the American People," *Atlantic Monthly* 43, June 1879: 718-28.

[19] Beard, *American Nervousness*, 293.

[20] Ibid., 334-35. Unlike many of his colleagues, Beard was against prescribing strenuous physical exercise for the recovery of the neurasthenic. The neurasthenic, he says, cannot bear severe physical exercise. Horseback riding and gymnastics especially must be done conservatively, because one must not draw too heavily on one's quantity of "nervous force." It is better to have too much rest than too much exercise, Beard advised, adding "a few years ago it was pretty safe to advise a person who was somewhat broken down to ride, or row, or practise gymnastics; now,

This emphasis on appearance parallels the emerging emphasis on visual representation of manliness and the sheer prevalence of white male iconicity in popular culture. Even Beard, building a career on the study and treatment of the weak and exhausted, joined his diagnosis to the concern with the *appearance* of physical strength and white male dominance.

In general, books and periodicals tended towards showing as much of the male body as could be justified by the purpose and text it illustrated. Examples of this are seen in Guillaume Depping's *Wonders of Bodily Strength and Skill*. Depping's book is a narrative, often anecdotal, history of athletic games and celebrated athletes. The book is divided into three sections: "Bodily Strength," "Bodily Skill," and "Skill of the Eye and Hand." The preface states, "His [the author's] object was to cull from every source that came within his reach anecdotes descriptive of the most remarkable exhibitions of physical strength and skill, whether in the form of individual feats or of national games, from the earliest ages down to the present time."[21] Depping begins with an apologia for the apparel that the reader is about to view, saying that in ancient times, "costume, regulated by the condition of an ever pure atmosphere, did not hide,

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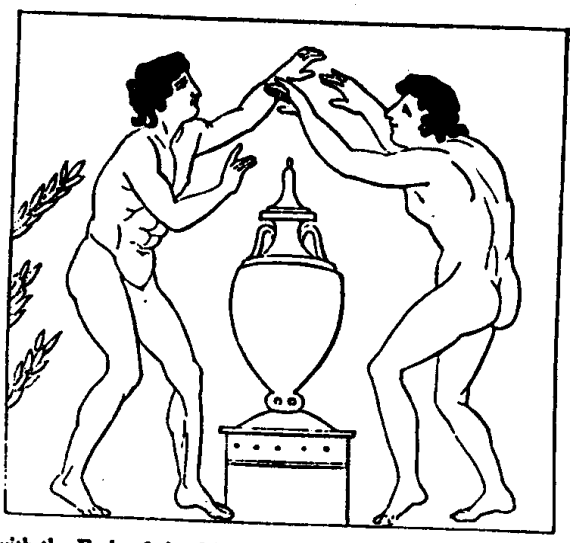
it is not safe to give that advice indiscriminately, especially to natives of the United States." Beard, *American Nervousness*, 309-311.

[21]Depping, ix.

but on the contrary, showed to advantage the outlines of the body."[22] This is an interesting comment, not least because the "costume" to which he refers is nowhere in evidence: these athletes are not wearing a stitch. Also interesting is the careful parenthetical attribution accompanying each illustration which tells the reader the source of the image. The following are examples of such attribution, which exonerate Depping from charges of impropriety while simultaneously permitting him to employ the images of naked men: "(From a painted vase in the Hamilton Collection)," "(After a statue in the Louvre)," "(From an ancient statue)" (figs. 2.1, 2.2).[23] Illustrations that, if realistic, would have



Contest with the Ends of the Fingers. (From a painted vase in the Hamilton collection.)

Fig. 2.1. "Contest with the ends of the fingers. (From a painted vase in the Hamilton collection.)" Depping, 1873, 24.

[22]Ibid., 11.
[23]Ibid., 12, 13, 27.

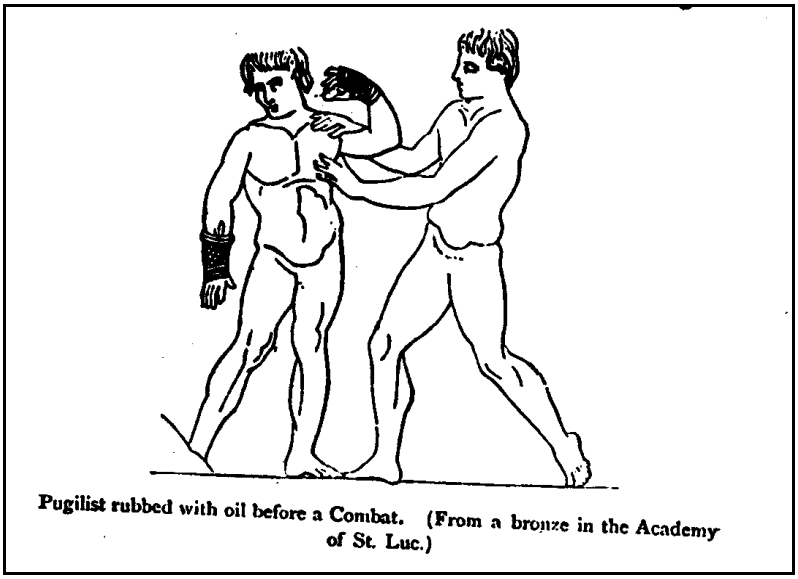


Fig. 2.2 "Pugilist rubbed with oil before a Combat. (From a bronze in the Academy of St. Luc.)" Depping, 1873, 38.

shown the figure's penis have been altered; in most cases, there is simply nothing there but white space. Another example of the appearance of the barely clad male is Ed. James's book, *How to Acquire Health, Strength, and Muscle*, published in 1878 (fig. 2.3). The cover features a figure of a nude man standing amidst various sports equipment: boxing gloves, Indian clubs, a baseball bat, athletic shoes. A banner-like shape proclaiming the word "Strength" stretches across the front of his body from the top of his groin to below his knees, thus revealing his torso and concealing his genitalia. The frontispiece illustrates athlete Charles A. Bennett lifting a barbell, his shoulder and biceps pumped to the size of cantaloupes, his chest and abdomen a grid of rigid muscle. His costume features

fringed trunks and gladiator sandals with a small, elevated heel. In another illustration, boxer John C. Heenan is shown lifting his arms to show the conformation of his torso, shoulders, and biceps; below the waist, he is clad in close-fitting knickers. The following page illustrates three athletes: two runners and a long-distance walker. These images portray the athletes in short trunks and shoes. Two of them may be wearing skin-tight shirts: it is hard to tell.[24]

Although the physical culture books of the seventies are one way in which the representations of race and gender and their politics made their way into the culture, illustrated periodicals made a more forceful impact. The periodical trade reached far more readers than the book trade, at least in the short term. Periodicals were cheap, they seen on newsstands, they came into the home via the postal system, they communicated to a viewer even if all that was seen was the cover, and they were easily picked up an browsed from cover to cover. In addition, illustrated periodicals carried cultural clout for the same reasons that image-based advertising is a more effective way to sell products than is a paragraph of text. The impress of an image is on the mind in an instant; text requires a reader who chooses to put forth effort in order to get the message. The *National Police Gazette* provides a good indicator of the interest in looking at male

[24]Ed. James, *How to Acquire Health, Strength, and Muscle,* 6, 7. James explicitly links athleticism to combat and remarks that men with good bodies are admired whereas a weak man is "imposed upon, if not actually despised."

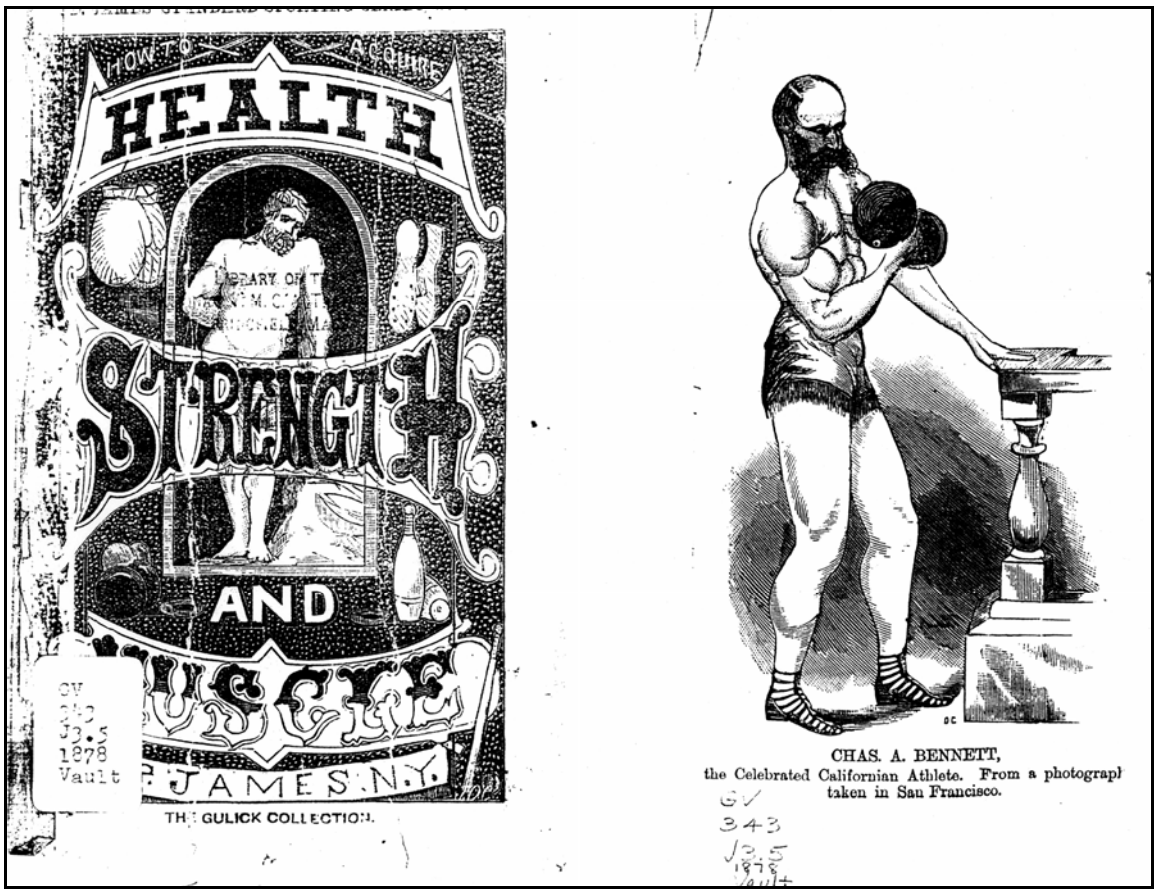


Fig. 2.3. Left, cover; right, Chas. A. Bennett, frontispiece in Ed. James, *How to Acquire Health, Strength and Muscle*, 1878.

bodies, because it appealed to a broad spectrum of male society, and its pages expressed and fostered the concerns of visible strength, physical competition, and theatrics. It was condemned by many, including Anthony Comstock, who tried and failed to have it indicted for violation of the prohibition against sending pornography via the U.S. Post Office.[25] Ultimately, the *Gazette* proved to be a

[25] Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 150-51. Comstock did manage to have Fox

harbinger of sorts, for although its imagery of the professional boxing ring was not adopted by the family-oriented and elitist periodicals, the trope of white male display and pride in a muscular physique did cross over to more mainstream magazines. The *Gazette* could not legitimate bodybuilding for middle-class viewing, but bodybuilding and athletics eventually made appearances in "higher class" publications. Although the *Gazette* was of dubious journalistic merit, it is not the aesthetic or professional authority of a publication—journalistic, literary, or otherwise—that determines its cultural influence. The *Gazette*'s appeal lay in its subject matter, it dramatic story telling, and its lurid illustrations. The images in the *Gazette* were there for one reason: they sold the paper to people who liked to read about crime, sex, scandal, and sport. The illustrations in the *Gazette* tell us that readers liked looking at illustrations of the scandalous, the shocking, the ridiculous, and the titillating. They also liked seeing illustrations of those who inhabited worlds that the viewer might hear about but never observe firsthand: the burlesque hall, the clandestine boudoir, and the boxing ring.

When Fox took over the *Gazette* in 1878, sport had not achieved the ascendance it would enjoy just ten years later. The masthead at this time proclaims the *Gazette*'s purpose right beneath its full title: "Illustrating the

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convicted once, for which Fox paid a fine of $500. Private suits for libel as well were brought

Sensational and Extraordinary Events of the Day." The illustrations during the late seventies bring to life events that were not reproduced photographically and which the artist, in most cases, probably never witnessed. The illustrations of this time were often fictionalized images that accompanied text; sometimes, however, it was the other way around: the text seems almost incidental to the power of the image.[26] Judging from the pages of the *Gazette*, the public's hunger for illustrations of crime could not be sated. Male power appears in various guises: sexual, respectable, violent, controlled, and depraved. The *Gazette*'s illustrations of physical labor, sport, and violence were not limited to depictions of males; throughout the end of the century, we see occasional representations of women engaged in a variety of enterprises: sports, boxing and weight-lifting in particular, nontraditional labor, and crimes of passion. This does not change the masculine-specific nature of how the culture saw these activities, nor does it indicate that Fox, or his readers, saw these activities as suitable for women. The illustrations are meant to show oddities, the weird, the reversal of social norms, the newsworthy, for the viewing pleasure of their audience--and their audience was white and male. This was a magazine designed for men, which is why it

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against the *Gazette*. See Mott, *History*, V. II, 335.

[26]In 1878, when Fox took over the paper, the Henry Ward Beecher-Elizabeth Tilton affair was the obsession of the moment. Judging from the length of time this scandal was covered, it appears that the United States loved nothing better than the satisfaction of reading about a fallen

was sold in barbershops, saloons, and certain hotels as well as on newsstands and by subscription. Elliott J. Gorn, who has written extensively on nineteenth-century sport and on boxing in particular, has noted that with respect to the *Gazette*'s ample coverage of violent crime, often against women, the "representations of female blood-letting here become a pornography of violence."[27] This is true whether it is the women's blood being let or their letting of someone else's blood. The favorite fare of *Gazette* readers at this time appears to have been murderers, and if the illustration showed the murderer in the act of committing the crime, so much the better. The following illustrations from May 1878 of Leonard Stroud stabbing his wife and then himself, and of William Henry Walters' "sanguinary performance in the streets of New York," where he uses a straight-edge razor to scalp a woman, indicate that the fascination with masculine violence was already being acknowledged and exploited (fig. 2.4). (The captions of the three illustrations above these two indicate a murder, a murderer, and an assassination.)

The visual normalization of white male dominance began to find its way into the world of amateur sport at about this time. Sport transformed violence into recreational activity and rendered invisible the reinforcement of a

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preacher. The public's delight in the spectacle of the plunge of the high and mighty provided an easy market for selling papers.

gender/class system in which men took action and controlled discourse. Although some women were interested in sport, and some physical culture experts advocated it for women as well as for men, sport was defined as an activity for men. Men who liked sport were normal; women who liked sport were unconventional and sometimes accused of being unwomanly, unfeminine, their status as biological women capable of reproduction open to question and ridicule. Some fitness and health professionals had been advocating exercise for women since before the Civil War, and so women who wanted to be active did have some support. But they were fighting a strong current that dictated that sports were manly. Where women found a safe harbor from judgment and ostracism was in schools for women and in the circus, where they could hone athletic skills into routines and acts that were shielded from public censure by the women's positioning as artists and as part of the circus "family."[28] Women who were interested in physical fitness were directed into gender-appropriate calisthenics and gymnastics, walking, and such activities as ice skating and horseback riding. Sports, competition, and exercise that involved extraordinary strength and performance were off limits to women for some time to come.

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[27]Gorn, Elliott J. "The Wicked World: The National Police Gazette and Gilded Age America." *Media Studies Journal* 6 (1992): 1-15: 10.

[28] See Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women, 1800-1870* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998) and Janet M. Davis, *The Circus*

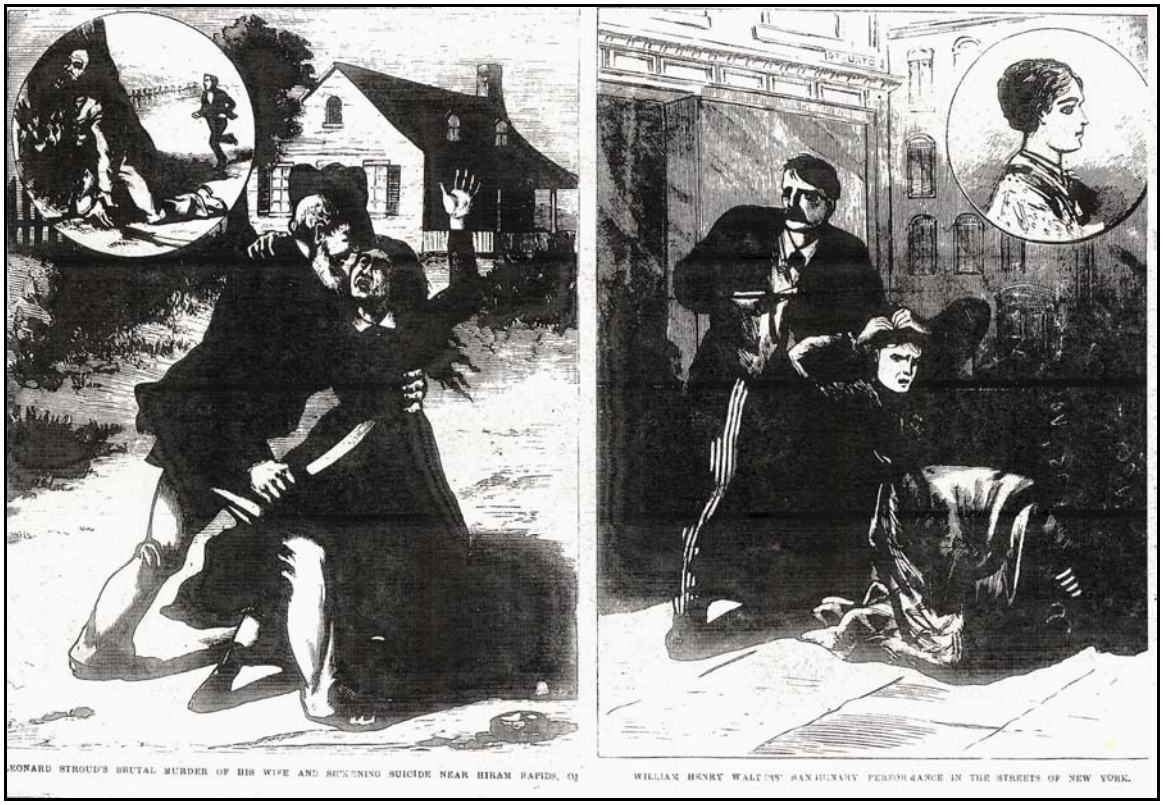

Fig. 2.4. Left, "Leonard Stroud's brutal murder of his wife and sickening suicide near Hiram Rapids," and right, "William Henry Walters' sanguinary performance in the streets of New York." *National Police Gazette*, May 4, 1878: 8.

Illustrations of muscular white males often is not readily recognizable as endemic to a discourse of dominance by white males. This is because the cultural understanding that men play sports, men engage in combat, and men dominate the media and other people in sport is already so embedded as "natural" that the viewer receives such a message without so much as a crackle of static. This is not to say that all white men hold power, or that those who do,

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Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

do so without struggle. In fact, the greatest struggle is often between men of comparable status within a given group. But as the illustrations reiterate, white male dominance was simply the status quo, "the way things are," and as such have a profound psychological effect. That representations of white men in the *National Police Gazette* often portrayed criminals does not change the fact that images of power were overwhelmingly of white men. Occasionally, images of power appeared in the form of an ethnic or racial body that was not considered "white." Nonetheless, the majority of boxing and wrestling champions were Irish, English, or "(white) American," all categorized as "white," as distinct from Japanese, African American, or Greek contestants. Over time, the images came to incorporate physical prowess as a condition necessary to holding power.

An example of one such illustrations appeared in the *National Police Gazette* in a feature about John Morrissey, who had enjoyed positions as state senator and as a member of Congress by the time the full page series of vignettes appeared in the *Gazette* in 1878 (fig. 2.5). (At this time, Fox had changed the masthead to read "The Oldest Illustrated Weekly.") Morrissey's image as he looked at the time of publication, seasoned and mature, anchors the page. The vignettes portray the *Gazette*'s choice of the salient facts of his life: his 1851

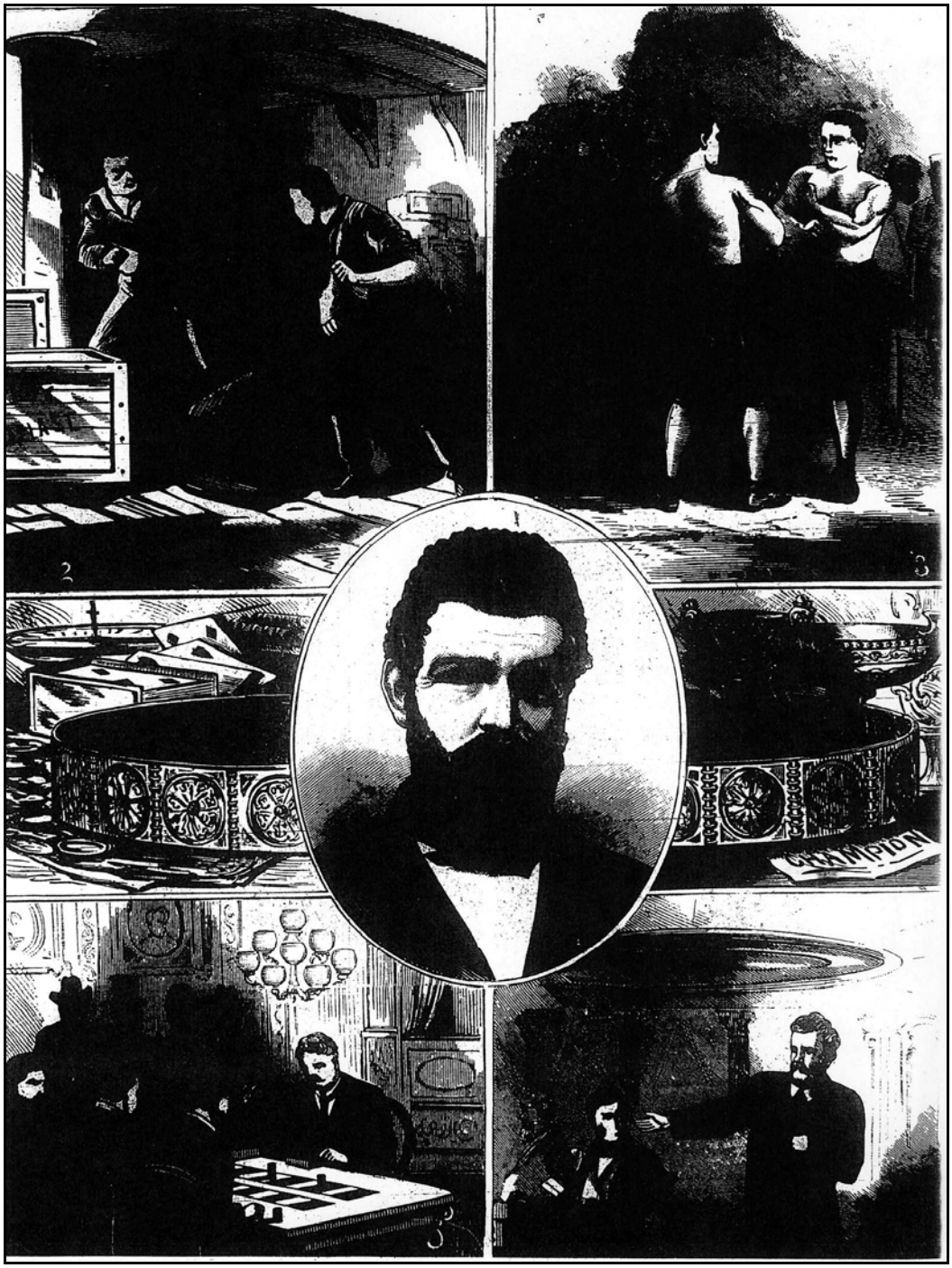

Fig. 2.5. Vignettes of the life of John Morrissey. *National Police Gazette*, May 18, 1878: 18.

journey to California as a stowaway from which he returned with experience in running gambling games and professional boxing, his fight with Yankee Sullivan in 1853, his interest in gambling (captioned "A Square Deal"), and his stint as a two-term New York representative in Congress. Behind his portrait are the ritual objects of the sporting life: cards, trophies, money, a championship belt, and a sign with the word "champion." As a redemption parable, this story could hardly be better. Morrissey, born in Ireland in 1831, became an immigrant to the United States when his parents moved to Troy, New York in 1834. He was working fulltime when he was still a child and built his powerful body through heavy manual labor. He developed also a "reputation for viciousness" and a track record of indictments for burglary and assault. He moved to New York City while still in his teens and worked as an emigrant runner and political shoulder hitter, helping and exploiting immigrants as well as subverting political campaigns and elections through physical intimidation. He was a brawler, a thug, a criminal, a gang leader, a gambling executive, and a tremendously popular boxer, especially among the Irish. He was charged several times with assault with intent to kill, but his friends in politics kept him from going to prison. In several bouts, when he was matched with another Irish boxer, Morrissey was the contender who claimed the loyalty of the Irish fans, while his opponent, even if he were Irish too, had the support of the rest of the fans. Morrissey fought his last match in 1858, became wealthy from the gambling business, and moved easily into politics, serving in Congress and two terms in the New York Senate.[29]

[29] Gorn, *Manly Art*, 108-127.

The import of this parable and of the *Gazette* pictorial to our story is Morrissey's "invisible" body: it is not female, it is neither thin nor fatty, it is not weak or small, and it is not dark. He holds the titles of "male" and "white" and those two factors, with the addition to his superior physical strength and endurance, gave him entrée into realms and levels of society that would have been locked to him had he been female, African, African-American, Native American, or Asian. He was an Irish man in the largely Irish world of working-class New York; he was a hero.[30] The parable and the body-type are inextricable. This life story could have been lived only by a strong white male; any other embodiment would have been either incredible or burlesque. Morrissey was not a model of middle-class manhood, but he was a model for a kind of manhood that generated tremendous popular interest. His kind of manhood had nothing to do with sobriety, lawfulness, middle-class morals, moderation, rationality, or following the rules. He exemplified manhood in a context of other males; men admired and loved him because of his toughness and confidence, his ability to make his mark and be enormously successful financially and politically in violation of the manliness that Victorian probity demanded. His success was a repudiation of the morality that held that only through proper behavior, diligent work and thrifty habits could respect and prosperity be achieved. His presence in sporting society, and his place in national politics, had begun and been won

[30] For the 1853 match in Buffalo, New York, with Yankee Sullivan, fans began arriving two days ahead of time; Gorn says that at least three thousand, and possibly six thousand fans, came to the event. An 1857 match in Buffalo between Dominick Bradley and S. S. Rankin, Irish saloon-keepers from Philadelphia, attracted spectators from Baltimore, Cleveland, and Montreal as well as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The 1858 Morrissey-Heenan fight, which took place in Canada just across from Buffalo, New York, drew fans from as far away as New Orleans. Gorn, *Manly Art*, 110-117.

with a large, powerful, white, male body and a disregard for laws about physical assault. Boxing was finding a hold in popular culture; its appeal was strong enough to cut through class distinctions among men, finding common ground in a mutual fascination with seeing which contestant was the "better man." Men who would not be found together in any other social situation could by counted as present in an audience at a fight.[31] Men who would not be seen at a professional match went straight for the newspaper the next day.

With this momentum in the sporting world, the incidence of white-male-display increased. *Harper's Weekly*, which had excelled at pictorial coverage of the Civil War, joined the media movement for more images of athletic men. Its illustrations of Charles E. Courtney (1877), "Police Athletics" (1878), and a full page of oarsmen titled "American Oarsmen Abroad" (1878) are explicit in terms of representing the muscular power and eroticism of the young men (figs. 2.6, 2.7). Courtney is shown bracing himself on the arm of chair, his torso elongated so that his abdomen pulls in, his arms powerfully muscles below extremely short sleeves, and his athletic shirt pulled tightly across his chest. A single-scull champ, Courtney, is dressed in a muscle-shirt and tight pants; his slouching posture suggests not a display of the benefits of rowing but rather an invitation to view a well-built male in repose. This sort of invitation to admire the muscular white male was not usually so erotic at this time, however. Representation of white men continued to assume the form of reportage of

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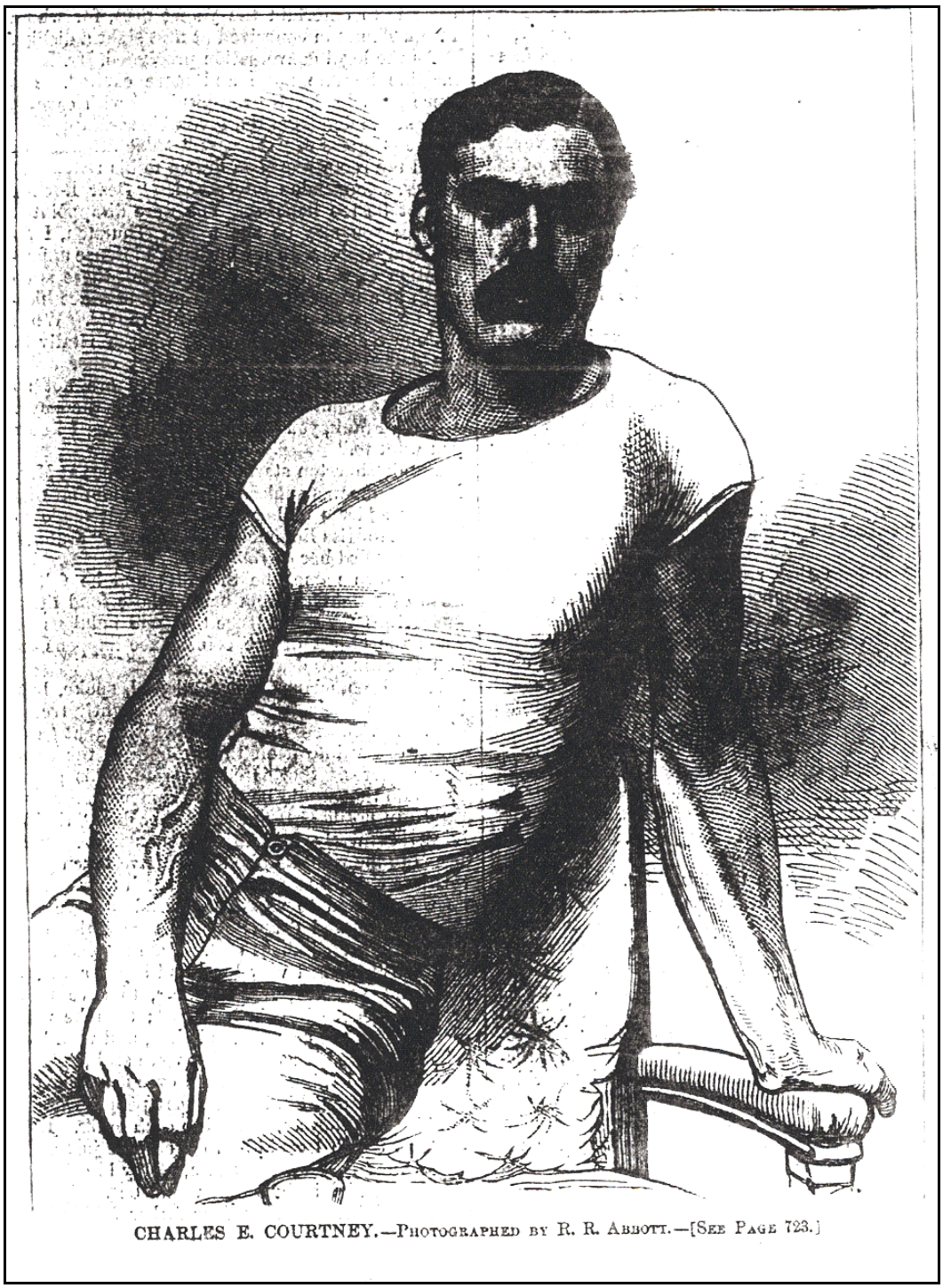
[31] See Gorn, *Manly Art*, 113. In his autobiography G. Stanley Hall said, " 'I have never missed an opportunity to attend a prize fight, if I could do so unknown and away from home, so that I have seen most of the noted pugilists of my generation in action and felt the unique thrill at these encounters.'" Gorn, 197.



CHARLES E. COURTNEY.—PHOTOGRAPHED BY R. R. ABBOTT.—[SEE PAGE 723.]

Fig. 2.6. "Charles E. Courtney, single-scull champ." *Harper's Weekly*, Sept. 15, 1877: 721.

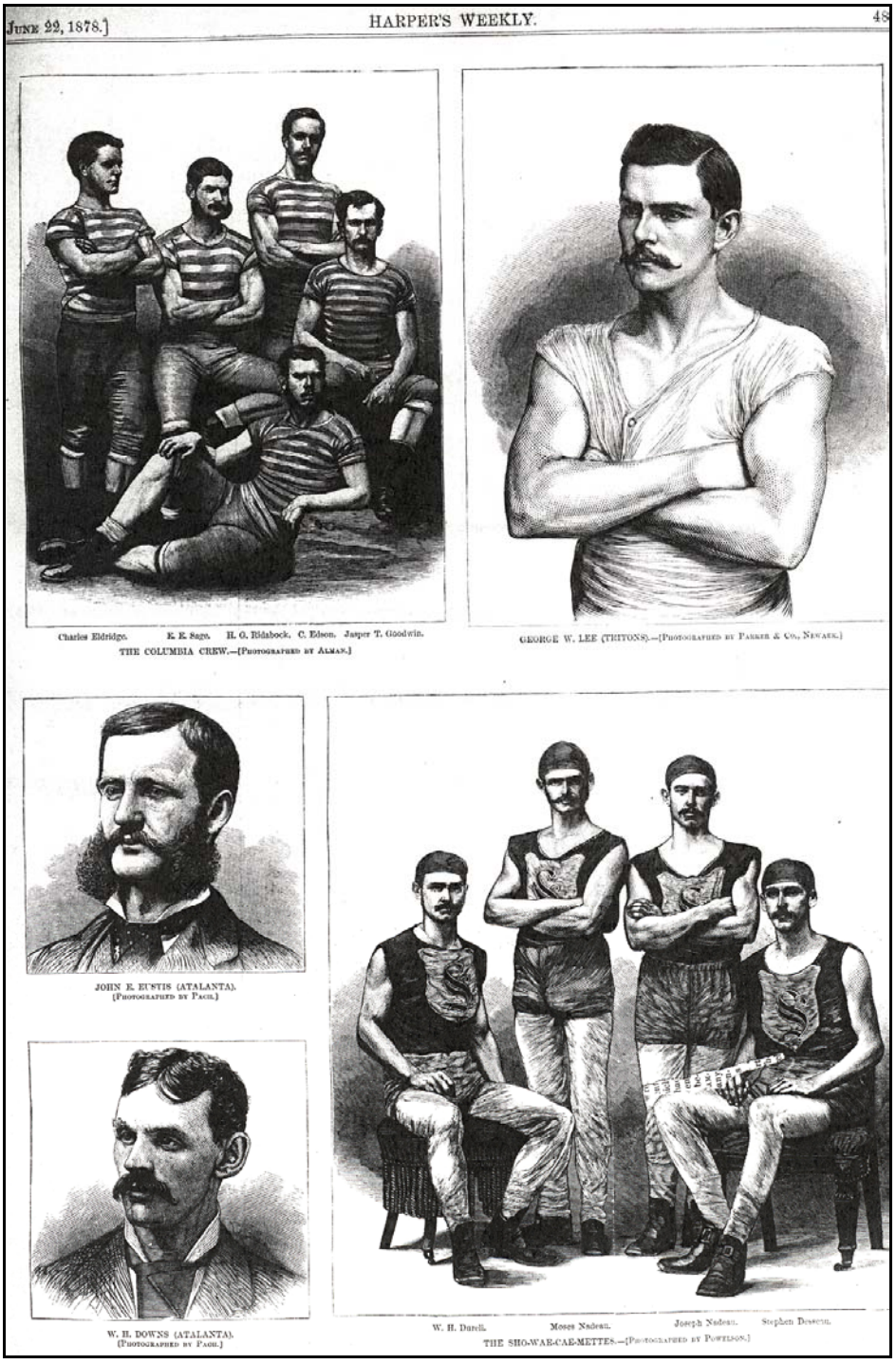


Fig. 2.7. "American Oarsmen Abroad." Clockwise from top left: "The Columbia Crew," "George W. Lee," "The Sho-Wae-Cae-Mettes," "W.H. Downs," "John E. Eustis," *Harper's Weekly,* June 22, 1878: 489.

sporting events. The police associations, for example, were portrayed in a variety of athletic endeavors and were among the first men used for standards of physical fitness and strength. Police officers engaged in wrestling, cycling, boxing, running and rope pulls, and their contests became an analogue to professional sports events.

Similarly, the illustrations of the oarsmen published on June 22, 1878 depict two teams dressed in their rowing uniforms, broad shoulders and big biceps emphasized. The portrait of George W. Lee, on the same page, shows another powerfully built young man. Note that of the ten figures whose torsos are shown, six of the men have their arms crossed over their chests, and of those, only two have rested one hand over the opposite biceps, which is the typical way to assume this pose (otherwise the forearm drops instead of staying crossed). The others have placed each hand underneath the opposite biceps, the effect of which is to push the biceps forward and out, thus making them look bigger. This suggests self-consciousness about image-making and power that became ubiquitous in *Harper's Weekly*. It also suggests that by the 1870s, bourgeois culture found acceptable for viewing by women and children such representations of masculine display. Granted, sculling is not in the same status/class category as boxing: sculling is genteel and is performed as a forum for masculine competition in Ivy League universities as well as by non-university

men: boxing is brutal, working class, and is done for money. Sculling is clean and dignified; boxing is sweaty and bloody. In addition, boxing was illegal until 1892, which would certainly have cast a pall over its appearance in a family magazine. Nonetheless, it is significant that in both publications, the white male body was being flaunted as a reification of power and control, and so the same message was being delivered and consumed, whether it was in the saloon or in the home.

Athletic contests continued to provide an opportunity and a pretext for the white male body to instantiate cultural power. Another *Gazette* image of U.S. sculling champion Charles Courtney, while not as provocative as the earlier one, is enhanced by the text. This time we see him in a formal pose, attired in his rowing uniform. Pictured next to him is Edward Hanlan, the Canadian sculling champion, in a similar pose and costume. Here, the *Gazette* tells us in explicit phallic imagery that "Courtney . . . is not yet thirty years old, weights 165 pounds, and is a splendid specimen of American manhood . . .. He pulls a long and sweeping stroke and shoots through the water like a rocket."[32] Such rhetoric was not uncommon. In writing of bare-knuckle boxing, Gorn comments on this "masculine aesthetic" and quotes a passage from the *Spirit of the Times* about an

[32]*The National Police Gazette*, Oct. 12, 1878, 13.

1842 prizefight which is indicative of the pleasure and pride that male sports fans took in being male:

> His [Christopher Lilly's] form is round almost to perfection; his sides, instead of branching from the waist, gradually outwards to the armpits, circle concavely inwards like reversed crescents; his neck is strong and muscular in a high degree; his head—a fighting one, remarkably well set . . .. If Lilly's appearance was fine, [Thomas] McCoy's was beautiful. His skin had a warmer glow than the former's; his form was more elegantly proportioned, and his air and style more graceful and manlike. His swelling breast curved out like a cuirass: his shoulders were deep, with a bold curved blade, and the muscular development of the arm was large and finely brought out.[33]

The eroticism of this passage constructs sexual desire as an inherent element of the boxing ring and its audience. Such descriptions of the erotics of male power for other males situate the men as not only powerful and beautiful but also as spectacular specimens of the human race. The construction of white male dominance could not truly have meaning without the presentation of its opposite, however, and it was as critical then as it is now to present the complete gender-system picture in order to confer meaning to "female" and "male." Meaning being transmitted at least partly by the distinction of one thing from another, the construction of masculinity as dominant is as dependent on the

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[33] Gorn, *Manly Art*, 74. In another example, Gorn cites the *New York Clipper* report on a fight in 1870: " 'As they stood there, on guard, their flesh glowing in the warm sunlight like polished bronze, as yet unspoiled and undefiled, an almost unconscious murmur of admiration ran through the anxiously awaiting crowd.'" Gorn, 169.

cultural acceptance of a passive, vulnerable femininity as it is on images and metaphors of penetration.

Demure and virtuous, delicate and physically conquerable, prescriptive vulnerable womanhood was the necessary counterpart to strong white manhood. An example of the femininity-masculinity configuration is seen in the following juxtaposition of images from the *Police Gazette*. "M'lle Cerito, premiere transformation danseuse and lithtning [sic] change artist," is dressed in burlesque costume which exposes her shoulders, the tops of her breasts, and her legs, which are crossed at the ankle ("feminine") and spread apart at the knees ("unfeminine"). She poses passively on a chair and looks away from the viewer. Below this image, the *Gazette* ran an illustration of a Detroit wrestling match between J. H. McLaughlin and Andre Christol. Because the cultural proscription against viewing breasts was not (is not) applied to men's breasts (another denial of the sameness between female and male bodies), the men are more exposed than was Mlle. Cerito: here, we see full torsos, bulging arms, and lots of leg. McLaughlin, who, the *Gazette* reports, broke his opponent's collarbone, is sitting on Christol's buttocks at the moment just before he forced Christol to the floor.[34] The image is of two men engaged in intimate physical contact, one man inflicting pain and injury on the other, for the entertainment and enjoyment of a paying

[34] Ibid., both images in Feb. 1, 1879 issue.

audience. This contact is called wrestling, and it is viewed as an acceptable athletic practice. These men were seen, physically at least, as belonging to the most fully developed group of their sex; their bodies and their activities are part of what defines "masculinity." It was understood by both fighters and audience that only others like them--other white men--could be their equals, even if this understanding were not factually true. (That white prizefighters steadfastly refused to fight black adversaries belies this notion. White fighters openly acknowledged that the reason they would not fight an African American was because they would not concede to equality in the ring and because they would not risk losing to a black boxer.)

By this time, agonistic contests between white males were becoming so popular that the *Gazette* dug back through history to offer its readers an illustration of a fight that had taken place nearly twenty years earlier. On February 22, 1879, Fox ran an illustration of the famous Heenan and Sayers fight of 1860 at Farnbrough, England, the fight which, *Harper's* had told its readers at the time, "had set all our youth a-dreaming about physical training."[35] Images of powerfully built men, stripped to the waist, appeared more frequently and commanded more column inches, showing boys and men what true masculinity was about; images of women of the burlesque showed them what erotic

[35]Ibid., Feb. 22, 1879. *Harper's Weekly*, September 22, 1860, 594.

femininity should embody. The following images are from 1879, and no doubt the build-up of such images over the 1870s led to the popular interest in the Ryan-Goss fight of 1880, which was the turning point for Fox's sports coverage.[36] His readership's voracious appetite for images of muscular white men, either engaged in physical contact in a battle for dominance or else displayed in repose, presenting their physiques for admiration by other men, would provide the demand that sent Fox to millionaire-hood, where he arrived in the 1890s (fig. 2.8).

Images of women in the *Gazette* were nearly as prevalent as images of men; the paper's origin as a crime and scandal sheet and its later coverage of theatrical entertainment held their place. The representations of women included occasional images that transgressed prescriptive cultural stereotypes and offered the spectacle of women defying gender roles. Two of the following images depict examples of these "different" women engaged in activities that appear to represent a greater degree of agency than does dressing as a stereotype of a heterosexual man's fantasy for the burlesque. However, had the activities in which the women are engaged--a lynching and black-smithing--been "normal" activities for women, the stories would not have been newsworthy (figs. 2.9, 2.10). The interest of these images derives from gender in the context of the

[36] See Mott, Gorn and Goldstein, op. cit.

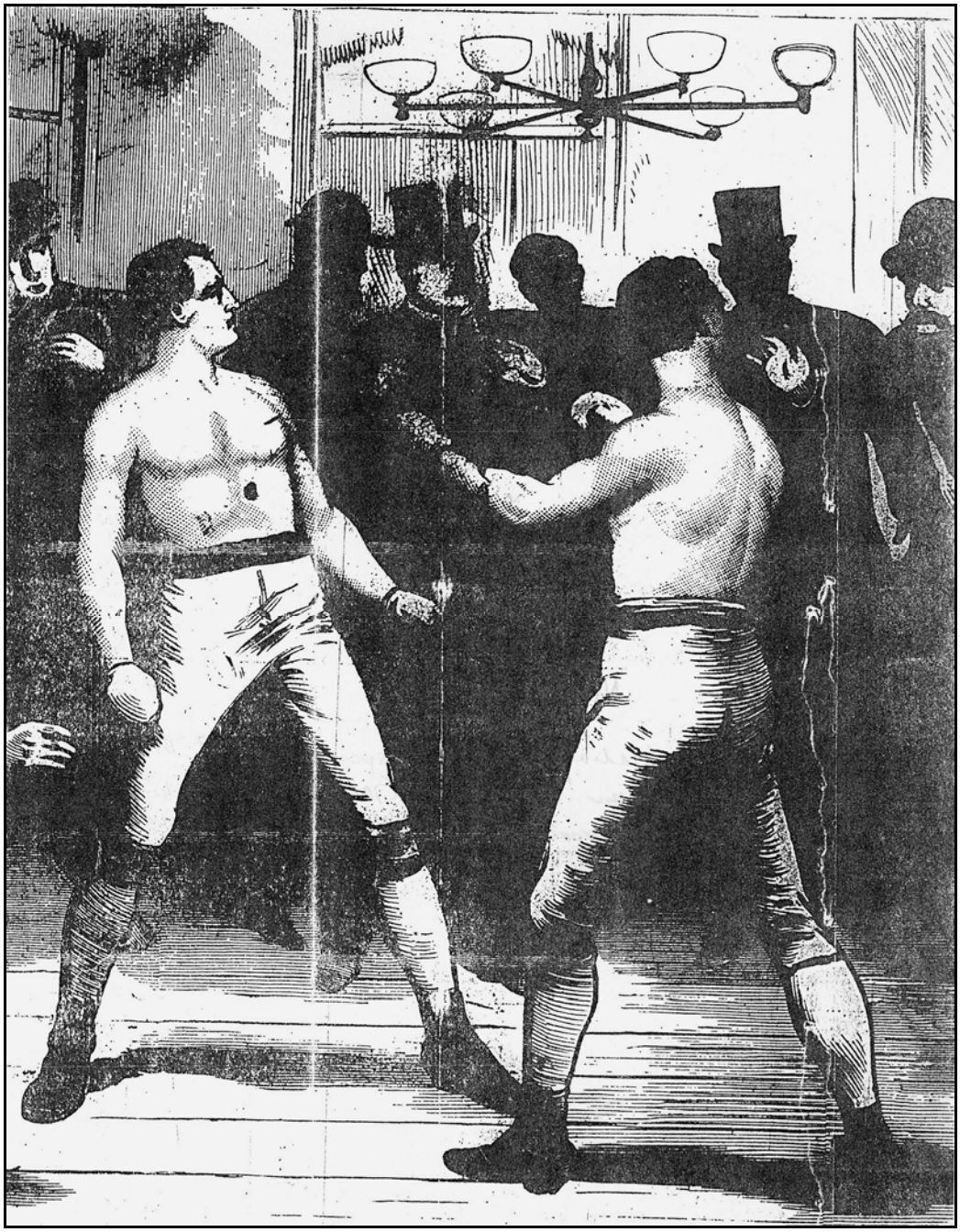

Fig. 2.8. "Gloved Gladiators—the desperately fought three hours' glove contest between 'Spring Dick' Goodwin and Mike Coburn, 'on the quiet,' at Brevoort Hill, New York City, which terminated in a draw by reason of the uninvited entrance of Captain Mount and his men." *National Police Gazette*, March 8, 1879: 16.

Fig. 2.9. "Female Lynchers—Kelly Patterson, charged with an outrageous assault on a young girl, is seized by the mother of his victim aided by a party of women, taken to the woods and flogged until exhausted, near Wytheville, Va.," *National Police Gazette*, Oct. 26, 1878: 9.

incident or the activity—the news value comes from the fact that the actors are female. However, these illustrations are the obverse of social and occupational expansion for women. Where women were portrayed against type, conventional femininity was reinforced even more, because the women shown against type were precisely that: they portrayed a contradiction of femininity that is both

salacious and amusing. Lynching and black-smithing are invested with meaning as activities only for men: they are "man's work," and normally off limits to the insertion of women into the scene. They are also violently physical, requiring a counter-stereotypical degree (for women) of psychological assertion and physical strength. "Female Lynchers" depicts a reversal of the accepted gender order. The women have united in a political stance and taken action to avenge a wrong. The woman inflicting corporal punishment on the man is humiliating him on three fronts: his physical submission to her flogging, his submission to the rest of the women and their witnessing of his beating by a woman, and the ridicule he will suffer from other men when news of the incident becomes more public. The blacksmiths, engaged in work that was considered physically grueling even for men, are powerfully built women. They are not, however, represented as physically "unwomanly," as they both wear dresses and are more voluptuous than muscular. Their image might challenge the male viewer to test himself against them in terms of dominating the iron and dominating the women sexually. Making the fantasy even more exquisite, the caption tells that they are "pretty twin sisters." Both illustrations represent women overpowering forces against which, by hegemonic definitions of being "women," they should be impotent. In the pages of the *Gazette*, Fox was not presenting illustrations of

Fig. 2.10. "A Brace of Beautiful Blacksmiths," *National Police Gazette*, May 3, 1879: cover.

women engaged in masculine activities in order to further their social and occupational opportunities: these images attracted attention because they were oddities; these images provided a kind of titillation because of their "cross-dressed" behaviors. Fox had concluded that portrayals of women as transgressive, self-assertive, and even violent excited the imaginations of *Gazette* readers. These images are certainly not in competition for cultural power with the icons of masculine strength that were starting to dominate the pages of the *Gazette*. The falling trapezist below wears a skimpy costume resembling underwear, her position mimicking one of sexual readiness (fig. 2.11). Number six portrays Muldoon (Fox and Muldoon were friends) as stalwart and beefy, standing with his legs spread far apart and his crossed arms folded on his chest, his large biceps and pectorals puffed up like pillows, telegraphing a powerful image of white male indomitability (fig. 2.12).[37] Contrast this image with "M'lle Xandree" (fig. 2.13). The gender coding presents hyperbolic examples of "male" and "female," and yet viewers consumed these images as representations of

[37]*The National Police Gazette*, May 10, 1879, 12 and May 31, 1879, 12. The *Gazette* published images of other women who transgressed gender stereotypes but whose representation was complicated by racism. Centered on the page, above the images of Hanlan and Courtney mentioned above, is a mug shot of "Julia Johnson, charged with the murder of Mrs. Mary Farmer, Clayton County, Geo." Johnson is an African American woman who has been *charged with* murder; her image is bordered on three sides by five pictures whose captions identify them as two murderers (white men), one alleged murderer (white man), one mistress and accuser of the alleged murderer (white woman), and one alleged robber (white man). *Gazette*, ibid., Oct. 12, 1878, 13.

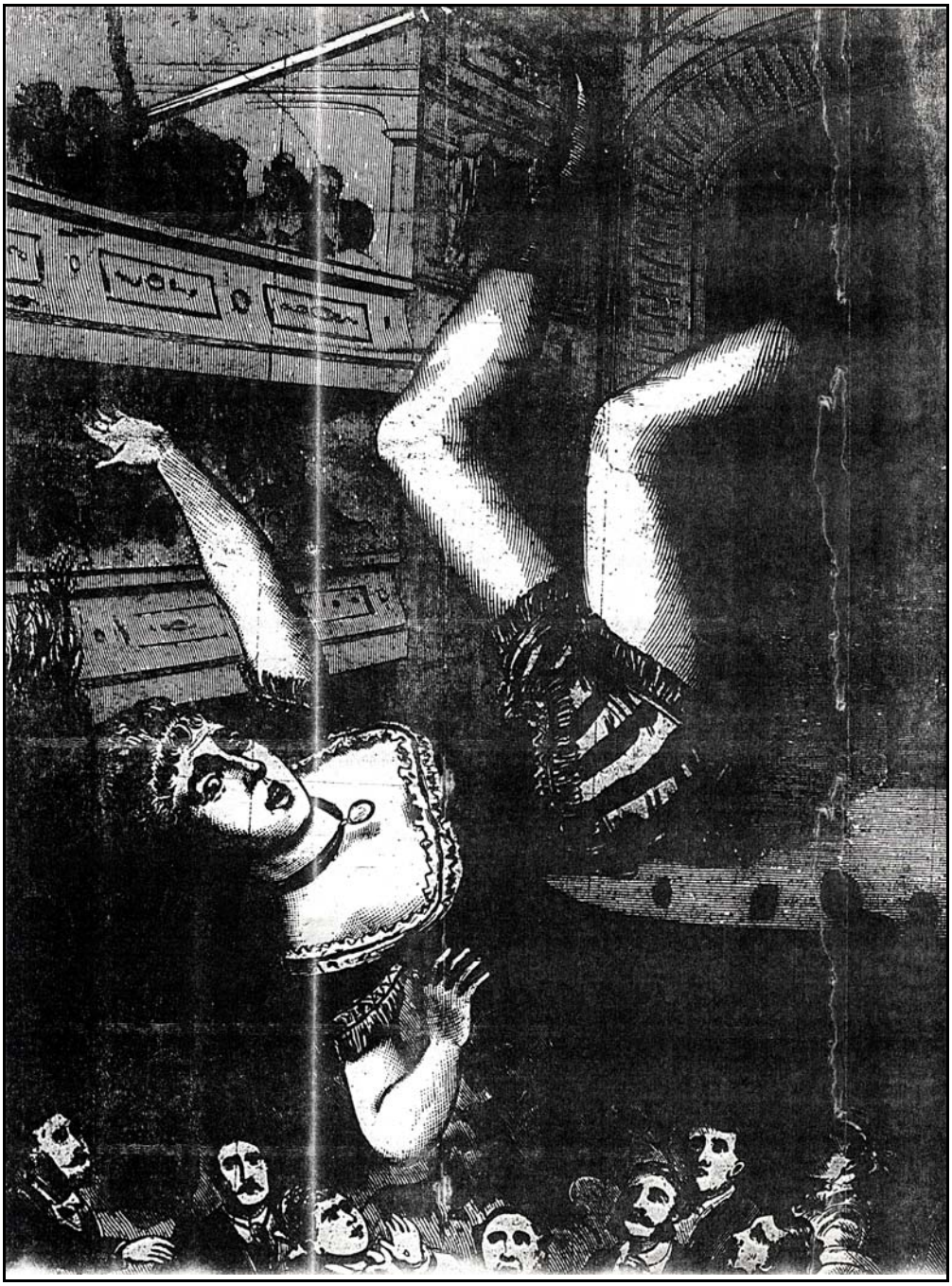

Fig. 2.11. "Female Trapezist…precipitated from a distance of thirty feet above the heads of the horror stricken audience." *National Police Gazette*, March 8, 1879: cover.

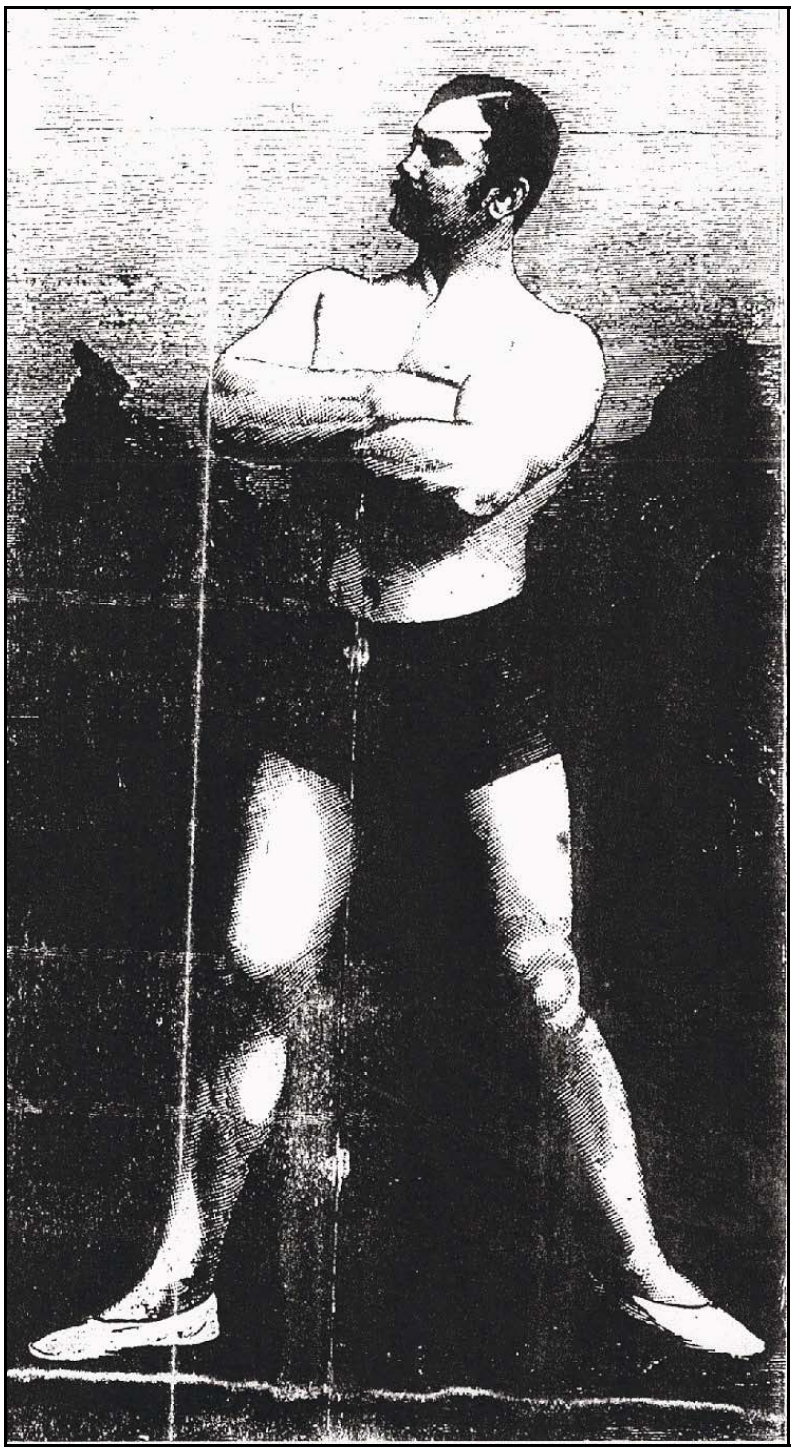

Fig. 2.12. "Officer William Muldoon, of the New York Police Force, victor in the recent Græco-Roman wrestling match with Thiebaud Bauer," *National Police Gazette*, May 31, 1879: 12.

Fig. 2.13. "Favorites of the Footlights—M'lle Xandree, of the Palais Royal, Paris." *National Police Gazette*, July 26, 1879: 12.

"normal" gender characteristics, and as such the images became benchmarks for expectations that viewers might have for themselves and for others. Note the difference in presentation--posture, expression, and clothing--between Officer Muldoon and M'lle Xandrée and the contrast in power politics those elements create. Patriarchal gender instruction could not be more effectively administered than it is in these images. Women are represented as conforming to stereotypes of helpless and sexually desirable or as strong, assertive and sexually desirable because of their challenge to men. They fulfill fantasies of what women "should be" and what they "should not be." A similar dynamic is taught by the images of men; the man being flogged is not adhering to rules of manliness, and the other images of men show the reader what a manly man should look like and should be do, or at least be able to do.

Race: Male whiteness as masculinity

Representations in the illustrated press showed the range not only of acceptable manifestations and behaviors for gender; they showed also hegemonic interpretations of race. As white athletes were represented more boldly during a renewed period of aggressive imperialism and colonialism by Western Europe, so was another kind of male body.[38] As with gender, the media

[38] The following examples and background of European colonialism in Africa, Asia, and Mexico give an indication of long it had been going on by the end of the nineteenth century. The Portuguese had established trading posts in Senegal in 1444, which were taken by the Dutch and

was instrumental in the creation of "race" as an entity visually defined and as a social, psychological, and political category. Periodicals had reinforced race and gender perceptions and prescriptions every time they published images of white men. With every viewing, such images transmit cultural "information" about gender and race. At the end of the nineteenth century, whites attempted to come to terms with the consequences of slavery, emancipation, reconstruction of the South, and of the subsequent abandonment of Republican principles and of emancipated African-Americans. Concomitantly, antiquated and self-serving notions of civilization and race held over from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continued their hold on the construction of racial difference and hierarchy.[39] Buttressing these conceptual structures were the direction anthropology was taking as a result of Darwin's ideas and the desire of a number of the men who ran the legislatures and the economy to control overseas peoples, for national and sometimes, personal, benefit. Racist images of human inferiority

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French in the seventeenth century, with France soon dominating the Netherlands. England gained control of the territory in the eighteenth century, and until 1815 lost and regained and lost it again to France, which held the area until 1960. France had occupied Algeria since 1830, had established a presence in Indochina in the mid-nineteenth century, and in the ruled Mexico briefly in the 1860s. Great Britain had been in Africa since the 1820s and, after evicting the Portuguese, who had been in India since 1498, had dominated India since the early 1600s. India was one of the war zones for England and France until the European-recognized start of the British colonization of India in 1757. Russia and England had been vying for control of the "Near East" for decades, and in the mid-1800s, Russia had pushed its dominion to Afghanistan, China, and the Pacific Ocean. In the 1870s, Belgium's King Leopold II was exploring the Congo River basin, and Germany and Italy were poised to enter the competition as well.

[39]Haller, viii.

and superiority proliferated in the media, especially when those being represented were U.S. citizens. White men were the news for all kinds of activities; black men, when they had allegedly committed a violent crime or were engaged in a "genre" scene. An example of the elite "white man's world" appears on the April 1, 1871 cover of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, which details a moment in the professional lives of some of the most powerful men in the United States: the members of Congress (fig. 2.14) The scene shows a reception room filled with well-dressed white males, many observing the central figure, Charles Sumner, who is being ousted from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations.[40] More important than the incident being illustrated by this image is the message about race, gender, and class. The positioning of white males as important actors in the social hierarchy is amply illustrated here, not least by the presence of three pages, all of them little white boys. These boys, dressed exactly like the adults--vests, ties, coats--are being trained for their role as important white men. By being included in the daily business of the nation's leaders, they learn not only the operations of Congress, but also how to dress, how to speak, how to stand and move, how to socialize properly, how to function autonomously and in a public, all-male world, how to

[40] Sumner, the Republican radical who had put himself at odds with Grant's administration by attempting to force England to cede Canada to the United States in reparation for England's

assume responsibility and authority, and how to internalize a position of power. In short, the image illustrates how the next generation of power-holders comes to fruition.

Although *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* reported stories for middle-class family consumption while the *Gazette* eschewed such staid fare, *Leslie's* did not ignore athletics. The next image presents a stunningly blunt statement about race, masculinity, and power in United States culture. The top half of the page shows the "Ward Brothers, victors at the late international regatta at Saratoga--the champion oarsmen of the world." In stark contrast, the bottom half of the page shows us a scene in "Virginia--a group of young Negroes returning from work--street scene in Richmond" (fig. 2.15).[41] The white oarsmen present a studied, classical tableau, the elements composed with consideration for aesthetics: the Ward brothers posed in what in our culture is termed a "manly" stance—casual, confident, non-deferential—and here again, the arms are positioned to exaggerate muscular mass. These men present an image of being self-confident in the world at large; they are at once dignified and relaxed. They occupy a specific gender, race, and class position. The image of Richmond, Virginia presents a sharply contrasting representation of males. They are not

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support of the Confederacy, also had alienated himself from the president by opposing Grant's plans for annexing Santo Domingo.

[41]*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 30, 1871, 40.

Fig. 2.14. "Washington, D. C.—Removal of Hon. Charles Sumner from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations—Scene in reception room, Capitol," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 1, 1871: cover.

presented with dignity, nor are they posed with an eye to classical tableau. These males are represented as children returning from a day's work. They are dressed in ragged clothing; one figure has bare feet, another's boot has a large split in the sole. Their faces are cartoon-like, unlike those of the oarsmen. Both of these illustrations purport to describe the scenes they represent--but do they? These images are more influential as prescription than they are as description. They place another brick in the wall of prescribed gendered and racialized hierarchies and leave no doubt about the capabilities of each group. Certainly, one would expect "children" to play on the way home from work, but contrast these children with the children delivering messages in the illustration of Charles Sumner. The boys in both groups are being positioned for their future roles as adults. The white boys are working in the heart of the nation's capital, learning to be leaders, the "young Negroes" in Richmond are learning to work and to live as manual laborers. Both illustrations serve as "snapshots" of the worlds these men will occupy and foretell far different destinies for them. These images do not merely "illustrate" two moments of life in United States culture in the 1870s. They also helped to create social realities that were acceptable to the dominant group.

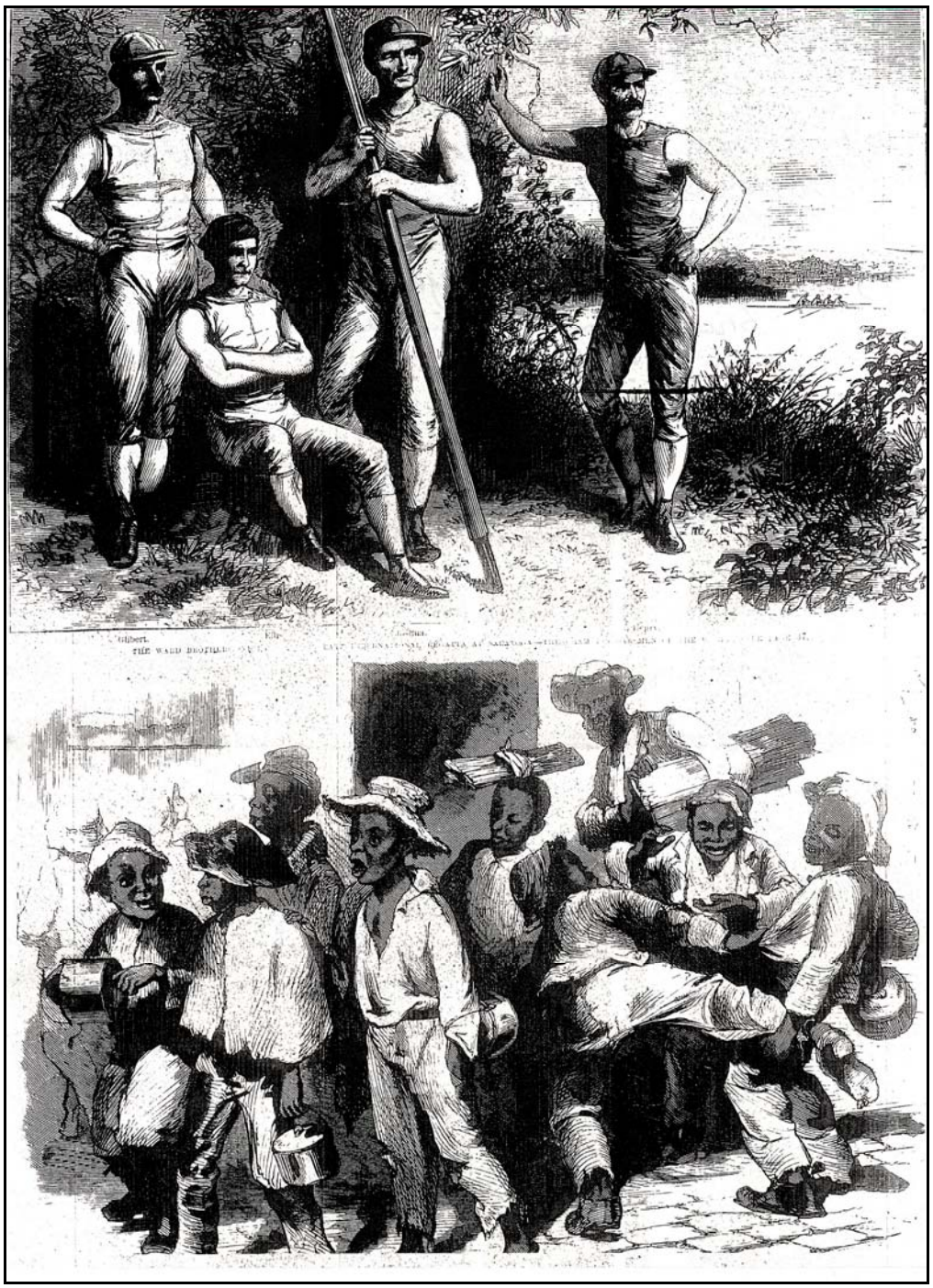

Fig. 2.15. Top, "The Ward Brothers, victors at the late International Regatta at Saratoga—the champion oarsmen of the world." Bottom, "Virginia—a group of young Negroes returning from work—street scene in Richmond." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Sept. 30, 1871: 40.

That elite white males and their activities, especially their worlds that exclude others, were of paramount cultural importance is tellingly illustrated in *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* of Oct. 21, 1871.[42] The image presents the newly renovated principal hall of the New York Stock Exchange (fig. 2.16). The artist created a perspective that places the men in the bottom third of the picture, leaving the upper two-thirds to space and to architectural detail. The room is huge. A vaulted ceiling rises high over the men, Corinthian capitals crown the pilasters which support the arches supporting the ceiling, and large arched windows at the second-story level permit a flood of light to illuminate the men's heads and top hats, reminiscent of "Annunciation" paintings of the Italian Renaissance. The sumptuous architectural detail bespeaks royalty, but the structure of the room, its arches and its lighting, is more religious than royal. The glory of the interior renovation makes it more than a place of mere finance. This space is a cathedral for the transubstantiation of labor into wealth, where men make fortunes without having to work to produce but rather by moving conceptual money around. Although this image purports to illustrate the architectural renovations to the Exchange, its message is not so simple. Any viewer of this illustration would have "read" that men are important, and that

[42]Ibid., Oct. 21, 1871, 88.

Fig. 2.16. "New York City—The principal hall of the New York Stock Exchange, as recently modeled and renovated." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Oct. 21, 1871: 88, 89.

men with white skin who control finance are the most important, for no other kind appears in this image. These men are signed as important because their proper role is in this space; the making of money from others' labor is the way important men do it, rather than engaging their own bodies in labor. In anthropological terms, this is the sub-population that controls the resources of the larger population, the keepers of the sacred treasure to which no one else may have access.[43]

Representations of domination and subordination also took the form of visual explorations of those who would not be found at the Stock Exchange. *Harper's Weekly*, in particular, with its interest in travel stories and news from abroad, catered to the middle-class image-market that was interested in the appearances of men from Africa and Asia whose cultures and autonomy were being overlaid with the power structures of Western Europe. Images of male bodies from other nations fed readers' curiosity about what men from other countries looked like; they also satisfied hegemonic beliefs about civilization, evolution, and race. When anthropologists and writers for the popular press defined Nordic, Anglo, and Saxon peoples as the most advanced in terms of

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[43]Gilbert H. Herdt, *Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981). For other discussions of masculinity-making and culture couched in the methodology and conceptual constructions of anthropology, see Stanley Brandes, *Metaphors of Masculinity: Sex and Status in Andalusian Folklore* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), Michael Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood: Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village* (Princeton:

evolution, then all other peoples within that logic took a place behind. The white fascination with the dark body poses interesting questions, not least of which concerns the white readers' attraction to peoples that science, religion, political theory, and history defined as radically different. The dominant discourse of race, evolution, history, and physical beauty placed the Anglo-Saxon-Nordic-Teutonic human being (itself a mongrelization of "races") at the apex of mental ability and moral and physical beauty. The abundance of images of the peoples from Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands reveal the doctrine of "white attractiveness" as expounded by D.H. Jacques, for example, to be a deception, however. The frequency and editorial presentation of these peoples who looked different from the average *Harper's* reader indicate that such images held an enormous power of attraction. The inescapable similarity that reverberated across the canyon of constructed difference between pale skin and dark skin attracted readers. If it had not, then the relentless discourse about difference would not have been necessary. Furthermore, fantasies of physical contact may have been at play for white men and women, imaginings about themselves and the peoples of Africa and India. One wonders how much fear, desire, and identification in the guise of curiosity, contempt, or condescension fueled the consumption of these images.

Princeton University Press, 1985), and David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of*

These images bespeak the importance of the construction of difference, especially of different maleness, to the white population. Some of the illustrations were of men engaged in athletics or posing in their role as warriors. In October 1877, *Harper's* published an illustration of a wrestling match in Baroda, in southern India, titled "Wrestlers in Baroda" (fig. 2.17)[44] The wrestlers wear a *langot*, presenting for the audience and the reader a display of their muscular bodies as well as a contest of athletic skill. On the typical *Harper's* viewer, the spiritual, ideological, and nationalistic import of wrestling in India was no doubt lost.[45] Wrestling in India is a choice of a particular, spiritual way of living. In *The Wrestler's Body,* Joseph Alter writes of wrestling, or *pahalwani*, in Banaras, a pilgrimage city, from the viewpoint of an anthropologist/ethnologist doing fieldwork in order to understand the meaning of the practice. Alter, who was "born and raised in India of missionary parents and educated in a Christian International School," states that his "study is about the identity, ideology and

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Masculinity (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

[44] "Wrestler's in Baroda," *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 1877, 835-36.

[45] See Joseph Alter, *The Wrestler's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 2, 3. Alter, a practitioner of wrestling himself, is concerned with wrestling as it is practiced in India, where, for the wrestler, it is a way of life. The practice involves the creation of self in terms of somatic principles and the articulation of "values and ethics of a distinct ideology." Men who were wrestlers in their youth continue in adulthood to derive their identity "from the complex discipline of wrestling exercise and values" even though their lives include the support of families and complete participation in their communities. Alter studies wrestling as a cultural text, much as Geertz investigated the Balinese cockfight.

way of life of the Hindu pahalwan."[46] Unlike wrestling as it is known in European and United States traditions, Indian wrestling is not intended to be or


WRESTLERS IN BARODA.—[See Page 836.]

Fig. 2.17. "Wrestlers in Baroda," *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 20, 1877: 835.

practiced as spectacle, even though matches may have an audience. Alter says "a number of people—businessmen, college professors, and peasant farmers—

[46] Alter, 2.

regarded it as the most important medium through which to think about themselves and to make sense of their world." In *pahalwani*, skill and technique are not the center of wrestling. Rather,

> the wrestler is eminently concerned with such complex questions as the relationship between moral and physical strength, abstinence and celibacy. ... For a wrestler, wrestling and all it entails is an ideology, a...holistic ordering of the world. At the locus of this ideology is the identity of the wrestler—what it means, among other things, to be strong, skillful, celibate, devoted, dutiful, honest, and humble.[47]

The wrestler embodies moral questions and thereby "questions the logic, and thereby the power, of the dominant ideology" of caste and its interpretation of the body.[48] The wrestlers in these images are not performing for an audience; they are wrestling, and a group of Indians and Britons in close proximity are watching.

But to *Harper's* readers however, "Wrestlers in Baroda" most likely presented an orientalist tableau of unfamiliar and entertaining cultural customs and costumes.[49] Great Britain had controlled most of India by the early nineteenth century, and by 1849 it ruled the entire country. In 1857, Britain defeated the Indian Mutiny and inaugurated reforms in order to maintain control of the populace. One of the reforms was the increased use of Indian men

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[47] Alter, 19.

[48] Ibid., 24-25.

[49] For the foundational text for late twentieth-century understandings about the political imaginary of the "other" and the global consequences of this mental ordering of the world—the other human being, the other ethnicity, the other race, sex, species, culture, nation, body, mind, and cosmology—see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). Alter

as soldiers in the British effort to retain colonial power and to defend its position from Russia. In 1861, Great Britain appointed councilors to the viceroy and formed provincial councils that included Indian men.[50] What may have seemed to Indians like progress toward eventual self-governance was no doubt altered in 1877 when Benjamin Disraeli arranged for Queen Victoria to be crowned "Empress of India." "Wrestlers in Baroda" represents social hierarchies in a way that most likely would have been reassuring to readers of *Harper's*. Three white women watch the match, with two of them elevated to the top of the image. No Indian women are evident, suggesting that only foreign women were permitted to attend these masculine displays and to associate with the higher class—the men. Indian laws and customs pertaining to gender were not enforced, or enforceable, with white women. The white men are dressed in English military uniforms and stand in the front row. The Indian men, also in uniform, are distinguished by their turbans, complexions, and moustaches, which are even more stylized than those of the white men. Because of their strong bodies, the two pairs of wrestlers might represent to a *Harper's* reader the personal

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acknowledges his own formative absorption of orientalism, which (once he recognized his "orientalist demons") he worked to exorcise from this study. Alter, 3.

[50] These measures by Great Britain are beautiful examples of Antonio Gramsci's conception of the process of hegemony. By responding to resistance with changes that would accommodate Indian demands to a limited extent, by enfolding Indian men into the British forces as allies in the guise of protecting India, and by setting up a system of Indian councilors to the British viceroy, Britain gave the appearance of releasing power and fostered Indian hope that the trend would continue.

empowerment of Indian men as well as their wrestling skill. At the same time, the wrestlers are disempowered by the exposure of their bodies as spectacle for colonizers. The spiritual core of their lives has been trivialized into entertainment for a foreign regime that has taken over their entire nation. This situation may have been made more politically and psychologically acute by their display to foreign women and by the acquiescence of the white men in this display, as if it was of no significance for British women to be spectators despite the apparent absence of Indian women. In addition, the politics is exacerbated by that fact that the men are faceless; they figure in the tableau not as human beings but rather as "the entertainment," struggling, sweating, and rolling in the dirt for the amusement of the crowd and of the reader. *Harper's* published another such image in November 1878, captioning this one "A native Bombay regiment at play—the wrestlers preparing to close." The illustration accompanies a one-paragraph article titled "Indian Soldiers at Play."[51] The story begins,

> The native Indian soldiers are not only brave warriors, but they are also splendidly developed specimens of muscular humanity. Big fellows they are, with marvelous strength, but with an elasticity of body that enables them to do almost anything short of turning themselves inside out. With a view of encouraging the practice of

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Nothing could have been further from Great Britain's intentions; these measures solidified its hold until the middle of the twentieth century.

[51] "Indian Soldiers at Play," *Harper's Weekly*, Supplement, Nov. 16, 1878, 921.

> manly sports, one day of every week is set apart by the officers for the public exhibition of feats of skill and endurance.[52]

The paragraph then describes athletic feats with swords, sticks, and *joris*, or "Indian clubs" and states that the "chief attraction…is the wrestling…. As seen in our picture the contestants are going through a series of gestures which natives always indulge in preparatory to closing with each other." On the left are other athletes, on the right are the "European officers," the only persons who are seated on chairs, the seating area clearly demarcated by a rug beneath the chairs. The race/gender politics are worthy of note. In the upper right, an Indian man places a garland of flowers around the neck of an English man, who stands as if his valet is attending him. Thus the racial/ethnic difference is presented as a gender difference: one man commands a higher position in this context than the other; the "subordinate" man adorns the "masculinized" (by virtue of political domination) man. In another context, this interaction could have illustrated a host welcoming a guest. Here, that was not the case.

As racialized entertainment went, however, resident Britons taking their recreation by watching a wrestling match in India no doubt was represented and consumed as pleasant family fare, interesting and instructive: the customs of another world. The *Gazette*, whose readership and purposes were less cosmopolitan than *Harper's*—professional sports and the burlesque theater were

[52]Ibid.

designated as working class occupations and entertainment—addressed masculinity and race in rather another fashion. Fox chose to capitalize on the violent aspects of racialized masculinity within the United States. One such news item appeared on June 22, 1878, when the *Gazette* reprinted an item from a Louisiana newspaper, adding an illustration of five African-Americans who had been hanged by a vigilante group in Louisiana. The caption states, "Negro assassins lynched near Bayou Sara, La. For complicity in a scheme of wholesale assassination." The story relates that when one Dr. William B. Archer was out for a morning ride, six men fired on him and then scattered. A posse caught five of them and a group of "citizens" examined the prisoners and found them guilty of shooting with intent to kill. The prisoners stated that "they belonged to an organized club, the object of which was to kill the leading white men in the country and establish a nation of their own." The posse resolved to hand them over to the law, whereupon the group started out for the courthouse, "but had not proceeded far before they were interrupted, taken by force and hung--all five of them."[53] A group of white men stands around the hanged men, and the message about race, justice, and power in Louisiana is clear: white men will be the legislature and the judiciary for African Americans, and the law will be created and carried out on an *ad hoc* basis. This image was published in the year

[53]*National Police Gazette*, June 22, 1878, 5.

after Reconstruction ended and the Redeemers were well on their way to recovering the pre-Reconstruction South.

Conversely, *Harper's Weekly* represented African men in Africa, people who already had a nation, or a territory, some form of geographic and political proprietary control. They were fighting, negotiating, and struggling in the face of European arrogance and greed. For the most part, African peoples already had nations of their own, and they were being kept extremely busy defending them from European nations who were using the continent as a theater for their turf wars. It is interesting that the article accompanying the illustrations of "A Galeka chieftain" and "A Fingo sentinel" mentions that the Fingoes have no connection with the Caffres "except as having been conquered by them" and "absolutely enslaved." This paragraph concludes "At present, however, the Fingoes are a loyal and partly civilized people under British rule." The Fingo sentinel is indeed wearing a coat of European styling and carrying a gun--products of an industrialized economy--while the Galeka man wears a loincloth and holds spears and a shield. These differences notwithstanding, the Galeka "does not compare unfavorably with other African savages."[54] Another portrait

[54]*Harper's Weekly*, Vol. XXII, Apr. 20, 1878, 322, 323. "Caffre," or "Kafir," was a name that the European immigrants used for a specific group of Bantu-speaking people of South Africa. Used for the inhabitants of "Kaffraria," the word eventually was used in the English and U.S. press as a derogatory term for all black Africans. "Kaffraria" was founded in 1848 as a British dependency

of a Caffre warrior and the accompanying text (June 1878), with its conflicting message that the Caffre is "savage" and shows both power--great skill with weapons--and inferiority--ineptitude in warfare--typically reveals nothing about this warrior or this people and much about the racism of the writer and the culture from which and for which this piece was written. Several quotations from this piece speak to this psychological paradox.

A Caffre Chief

> The accompanying portrait, which was copied from a photograph procured at Graham's Town, the capital of the eastern division of Cape Colony, will give our readers some idea of the style of savage with which the English are contending on the borders of their South African possessions. The original of the picture is the son of a chief, and although a mere boy, is said to exhibit great skill in the use of the native weapons. These, however, are of the rudest description, consisting principally of clubs, *assagais*, and spears and lances. If it were not that the Caffres had soon learned to adopt arms of the white man, their repeated struggles with the English would have been too insignificant to attract attention.

Another passage offers an explicitly racialized description, evincing ethnological voyeurism and eroticism.

> The Caffre are a decidedly superior race to many that inhabit the various sections of the African coasts. They are a tall, well-made people, generally handsome, of a dark brown or bronze color, with hair in short woolly tufts. Toward the north they gradually become more assimilated

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and was added to Cape Colony in 1865. *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (Columbia University Press, 1993), 1442.

> to the negro type, until finally the two races seem to blend together. They are brave, and in times of peace kind and hospitable to strangers. The men make affectionate husbands and fathers. Their intellectual attributes are by no means contemptible. An English writer says, "Their minds have a peculiarly acute and logical turn, which in many of our 'palavers' with them often gave them the best of the argument. . . . The general rule of the chiefs is patriarchal. Each ruler is assisted, however, by a number of "pakati," or councillors, whose advice is generally followed implicitly . . .. The dress usually consists of a blanket; the former robe of softened ox-hide is now seldom seen. In time of war the Caffre appears in the field naked, and painted with red clay.

The writer goes on to detail the history of the Caffre wars, so-called by the English, which had been going on since 1798, the invaded people and its allies struggling to drive the invading English out of their homelands. The article ends thus:

> Naturally the Caffres hate their invaders, and difficulties between them and the colonists are constantly occurring. The present struggle, which, according to ANTHONY TROLLOPE, is not of sufficient magnitude to be justly entitled to the name of a war, began with a difficulty between two tribes, one of which was under British protection. This necessitated the interference of the English troops, so that 1878 adds another to the long list of "Caffre Wars."[55]

These excerpts make obvious the writer's attraction and fascination with his subject, his condescension towards this people, and by extension, all African peoples, as well as the arrogance of colonial and imperial politics this writer

[55]Ibid, Supplement, June 1, 1878, 441.

represents. Similar representations of Africans, Asians, and Native Americans formed a large proportion of *Harper's* editorial content. *Leslie's* publications, which enjoyed a large circulation as well, carried the same messages into the mainstream culture. A few examples indicate how the world was being constructed in terms of the popular press.

Not all images of the "native other" were so ostensibly amicable or so condescending. Some were meant to be racist and denigrating. Readers of the periodical press were interested in many of the inhabitants of Africa, especially after the 1871 publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, which traced similarities between species, most alarmingly those between primates. The public was interested in apes, monkeys, gorillas, and orangutans; illustrations of those animals frequently graced the pages of the various periodicals. Capturing them was of particular interest, as may be seen in the following illustration, published in 1878 in *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* (fig. 2.18). The African men are driving the "gorilla" into the arms of the white man (who is, of course, fully clothed, complete with hat and vest, despite a climate that has the other men dressed in loincloths). The men use a long stick with a sort of noose to prod the gorilla forward, and the gorilla, showing the similarity between itself and the African men, holds the stick in exactly the same fashion, pointed toward the belly of the white man. The gorilla looks human, especially in the facial features.

Only the fur covering the body marks it as a "gorilla." The African men and the gorilla are facing the same way, approaching the white man, and they seem to form a unified group. The white man does not try to avoid the stick pointed at his belly. He holds up his arms fearlessly, exposing his abdomen as if to block the gorilla from running past him in an attempt to escape. This is ludicrous, as the gorilla looks as if it is intent on impaling the white man. Even though the African men have captured the gorilla, now that the deed is done, the white man will take control of the situation and no doubt will tell the folks back home about the time he came close to death when he captured a gorilla in Africa. The image implies that gorillas and African men are so much alike that they use the same tools and behaviors to act upon their worlds. The article that accompanies this drawing is titled "The Gorilla and Other Apes."[56]

In the same issue, *Leslie's* published an illustration of African hospitality titled "Bumbireh Hospitality--The Negroes pulling Stanley's canoe ashore."[57] Henry Morton Stanley, a journalist and explorer, was working on an assignment backed by several U.S. newspapers to further the explorations of David Livingstone, the Scottish missionary and explorer. Livingstone had died in 1873. This drawing shows Stanley sitting in his skiff, a scalloped canopy erected over

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[56]Richard A. Proctor, "The Gorilla and Other Apes." *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Vol. V, No. 5, May 1878, 545.
[57]*Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Vol. V, No. 5, May 1878, 521.

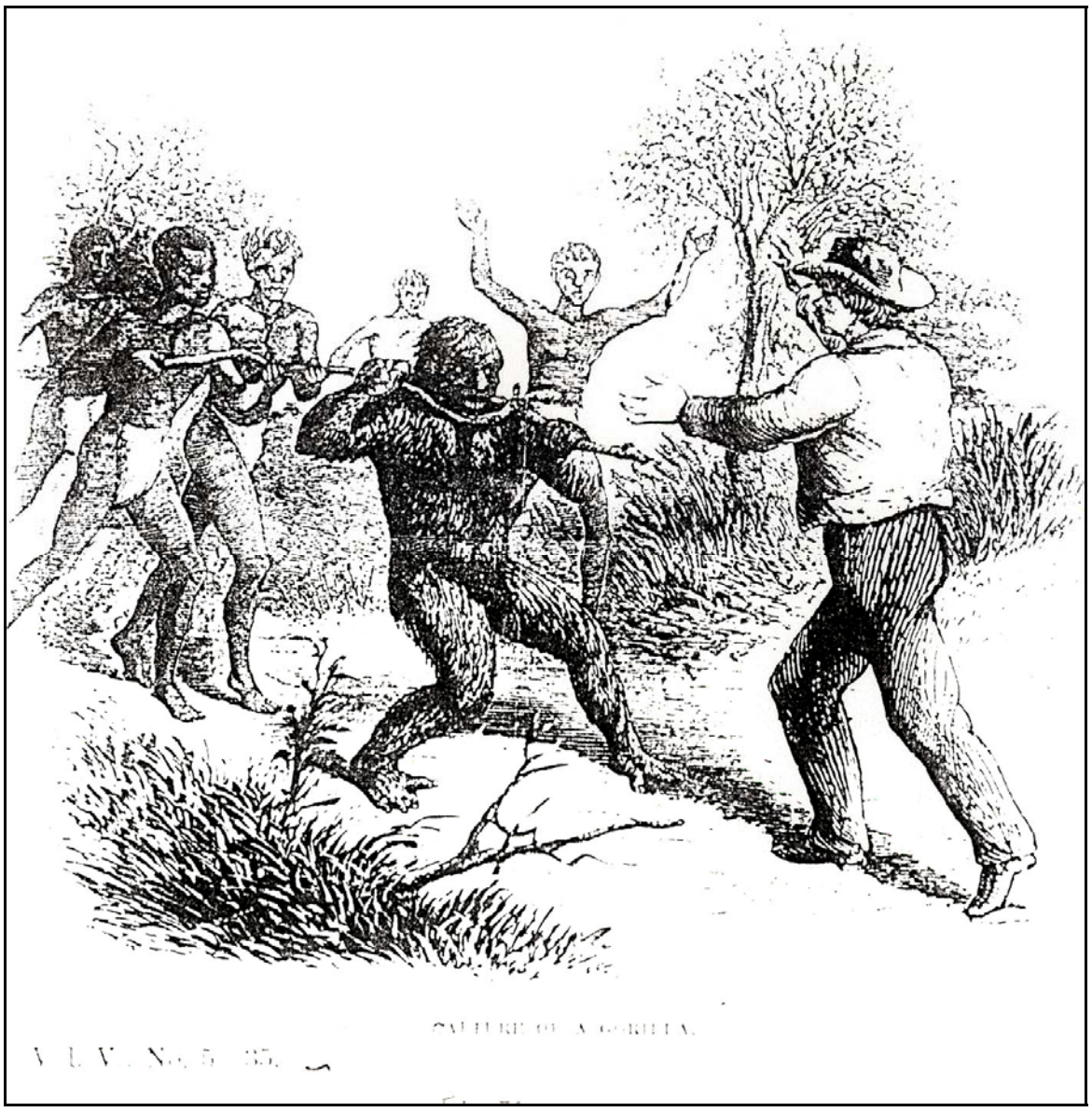

Fig. 2.18. "Capture of a Gorilla." *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, May 1878: 545.

him to protect him from the sun. The canoe must have been pulled quite far ashore, for it is completely surrounded by African men, who are clearly standing on solid ground. The scene is one of complete mayhem: several African men, no doubt Stanley's guides and aides, are dressed in white and stand stoically on the

boat. The other men, who vastly outnumber Stanley's party, clearly would sooner see him dead than not: one man does the artist's interpretation of a war dance, and the others brandish spears and clubs. An archer, positioned in the exact center of the image, threatens to drive an arrow through Stanley's heart. It would be difficult for a reader of this image not to find credible a number of current beliefs in the U.S. about race, civilization, and savagery. Two more images from *Leslie's* and *Harper's* reveal the complex mixture of denigration and eroticism with which African warriors were viewed by their readers. Within two weeks of each other, the publications came out with illustrations of two brothers, the Zulu king Cetshwayo, here spelled Cetywayo, and his brother, Dabulamanzi. These men and their army had defeated the British at Isandlwana, or as *Harper's* reports, "had wrought such awful havoc upon the defenseless little camp at Isandula."[58] Again, the text reveals an attraction to Dabulamanzi while denying

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[58]*Harper's Weekly*, "The Zulus as Warriors." Supplement, May 17, 1879, 397. Not surprisingly, the text does not question the presence of the English in South Africa nor their plan to join with the Boer as a way to control the diamond mines at Kimberley and as a way to shift the cost of running the empire to this alliance and alleviating the demand on England's purse. The British governor believed that Cetshwayo had a huge army and was planning a continent-wide force to get rid of white power. In addition, he had decided that the best way to control the Boers was by taking up for them against the Zulu in a boundary dispute. A British adviser decided in favor of the Boer, reversing an earlier decision in favor of the Zulu. London set up a commission to resolve the conflict and found in favor of the Zulu. In executing this decision, the British commander in chief, violating its intent, included conditions that he knew the Zulu could not accept unless they agreed to abandon their way of life. The deadline for Zulu agreement passed. The commander in chief decided to crush the Zulu before his government could stop him and sent 18,000 troops into Zululand, slightly more than half of them Africans. When one small party of troops, camped at Isandlwana, found the Zulu army waiting to defend their land, the Zulu began their approach to the troops, encircling and defeating them. So much for the "defenseless

that attraction: "the above engraving shows the far from attractive lineaments of the Dabulamanzi, brother of the Zulu king." However, later in the same paragraph, the writer states, "So far as the *personnel* of the famous savage is concerned, we learn that he is a handsome man, well-featured, with most beautiful teeth, tall, graceful, and stately, while, as some of his admirers assert, he is decidedly aristocratic in manner."[59] The writer finds this man aesthetically pleasing and culturally desirable, and so engages in rhetoric that is condescending and objectifying while it pretends to admiration. It is notable that this kind of rhetoric permeates the relation of distance, both politically and geographically, between the writer and the subject/object of the writing. The African man in Africa was permitted into the discourse of desire; he was not seen as a threat to life in the United States because he was "far away." The African American man, on the other hand, was part of life in the United States. He had a presence, a voice, a power, and a proximity that threatened danger. How else to account for the madness, the terror, and the hysteria on the part of whites that resulted in the continued crushing of the African American population after emancipation and Radical Reconstruction? Unlike the African man in Africa, the African American man could not be admitted into the discourse of desire in any

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little British camp." Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830-1914* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 103-108.

[59]*Harper's Weekly*, Supplement, May 17, 1879, 397.

terms that could be interpreted as laudatory. He entered that discourse as the locus of obsessive imaginings and fascination.

Representations of the male body were not limited to athletics and illustrations of expository pieces about distant cultures. Even journalistic reportage of the art world provided opportunities to represent the male body. *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* published in January 1877 an illustration of "The Dancing Faun, a celebrated antique statue," the text to which is so thin that it constitutes no more than an obligatory nod to its purpose as a justification for publication of the image (fig. 2.19). The "Faun" does not illustrate a larger text, but rather graces the issue strictly for its value as a celebration of the white male body and is a precursor to what will come to be termed by the end of the century, "body building." *Leslie's* editorial staff could come up with only a few short paragraphs, ending with "of works which Italy rears on the pedestal of her museums and points to with pride, few surpass the 'Dancing Faun,' of which our exquisite engraving enables the reader to form so adequate a conception."[60] The next month, *Leslie's* ran something a little more beefy, "The Farnese Hercules," commenting that "every line gives the impression of immense strength and vigor."[61] Again, the message is the representation of white manhood as instruction in gender codes. Less impressive but nonetheless another gratuitous

[60]*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Monthly*, Vol. III, No. 1, Jan. 1877, 29.

image of a naked white man was *Harper's Weekly* 's illustrated "A Parisian Art School" (1878) with a full page of caricatured vignettes. The center and largest vignette represents a class of students in the process of painting the nude male model, who stands with his back to the reader.[62] Another example of this sort of male display appeared again in 1879 in *Scribner's Monthly* (more sedate than *Harper's*) story by William C. Brownell's "The Art Schools of Philadelphia." The article included ten illustrations, four of which present images of the nude body, three of those being the male. We see the white male form in the antique class, in the male life class, and in the men's modeling class.[63]

The promotion of the white male body seemed to be endlessly adaptable, able to find a place in discourses so varied that no one could remain untouched by it. From art to professional boxing, medicine to universal suffrage, Africa to Wall Street may appear to be too far asunder to join, but they were not. They were connected by a social order that related individuals, groups, gangs, races, ethnicities, classes, sexes, and nations according to the traditional dichotomy of gender: dominance and submission, the exercise and sometimes the struggle of

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[61]Ibid., Vol. III, No. 2, Feb. 1877, 185.

[62]*Harper's Weekly*, April 6, 1878, 276.

[63]William C. Brownell, "The Art Schools of Philadelphia," *Scribner's Monthly* , Vol. 18 (5), Sept. 1879, 737-750. These illustrations were done by students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in Philadelphia, where Thomas Eakins was teaching at this time. Among the artists whose work appears in this article are Alice Barber, Susan Macdowell, and Thomas Anschutz.

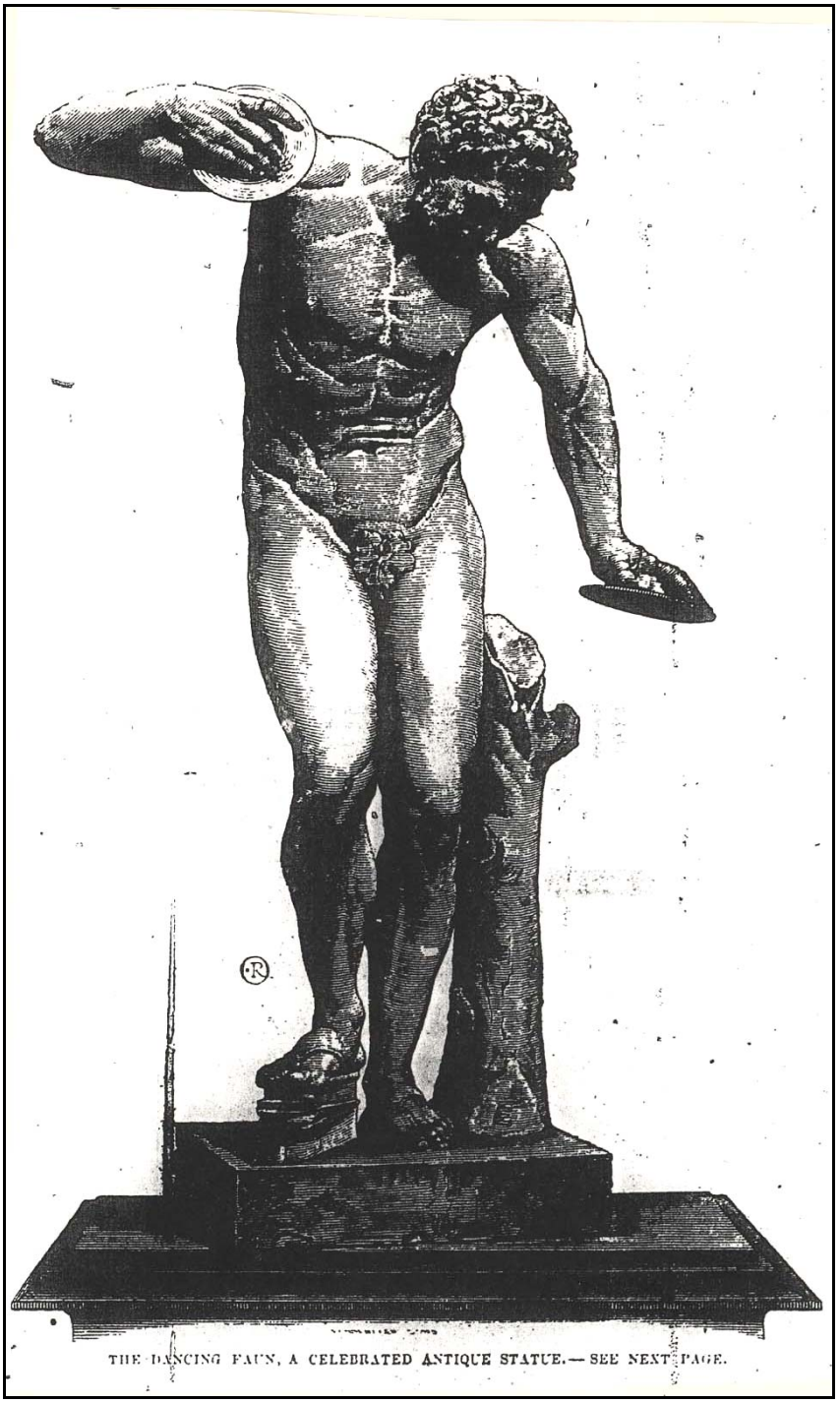

Fig. 2.19. "The Dancing Faun, a celebrated antique statue." *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, January 1877: 29.

imposing one's will on the course of events. Along with the representation of the male as triumphant, however, was another image that spoke to what may have been the deepest fear about manly identity. This was the image of the weak, malformed, inept, and sexually impotent white man who would be beaten in any kind of performance that called for physical adeptness. As outsider groups increased their insistence on a better social position, middle-class and elite white men's anxieties increased. We can see this in the rhetoric of ads for sexual restoratives, products that would turn back the clock on the pernicious effects of sexual excesses and self-indulgence, one of the euphemisms for masturbation. We can see it in the attention being given to the white male body in the illustrated press; we can see it in the disjunction between the display of the powerful bodies of African, Indian, and Native American bodies and the text which denigrates their abilities and their cultures. Despite the inundation of reassurances about the superiority of the western European racial type and its descendants, the real fear of losing social and political position was gaining ascendancy. The ruling class of white males became determined to prevent that loss of power from happening, and they took drastic measures to ensure their goals. In the face of encroachments on the control by white males over cultural hierarchies, the visual rhetoric of athletics and being fit, muscular, and able to

compete against anyone who might challenge the existing order became more and more powerful.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the iconography of the muscular white male body became its own best proselytizer. Recall the images in the previous pages and put them with the words of Lloyd Bryce, who wrote in 1879 in the *North American Review*, "If our best citizens are dyspeptics, our worst subjects will rule the republic." Bryce continued, "the healthy tone of English political life" is one result of the "cultivation of sport by the upper classes, and of competition of different classes on common ground."[64] Political power was being constructed in terms of physical fitness; Bryce's comment is revealing of the means by which he saw the "best citizens" retaining their social and political position. They would cultivate sport--i.e., take over the athletic activities of the working classes--and would engage in athletic contests with those "different classes on common ground," thus creating a context in which they could emerge victorious over those classes and prove their superiority. The common ground of physical prowess was the only ground on which the "different classes" could have posed a threat to the upper classes and the only ground on which they would not be handicapped by disparities in economic means, education, political power, and ownership of resources. Bryce was

[64]Lloyd Bryce, "A Plea for Sport." *North American Review* 128 (May 1879): 511-525.

warning the "best citizens" that unless they were able to perform physically, the rabble would govern—too much democracy would be the downfall of the current order. Bryce's emphasis is on the white male body and its effectiveness in conflict, in producing strong white children, and in terms of presenting an image of dominance. This message was reworked and duplicated in all manner of periodicals, and American readers would have had no difficulty decoding such jeremiads. As we shall see, Euroamerican beliefs about the divine and natural supremacy of global Anglo-Saxon (male) dominance became obsessions in the 1880s as white men from all social classes strove to make their bodies into signifiers of masculinity. Anthropometry expanded into new arenas, appearing in such diverse venues as the ivied walls of northeastern universities and the pink pages of the *National Police Gazette*. The emphasis of anthropometry expanded as well; instead of delineating racial differences, the focus was trained on the sizes of various body parts of white men and how to make those parts bigger.

By the end of the 1870s, representations of men were showing a trend towards masculinity as a performance, and the publication that was best suited for this representation, because of its content and reputation, was *The National Police Gazette*. In 1879 Fox began to dedicate more column inches to sports, and in 1880 the West Virginia prizefight between Paddy Ryan (U.S.) and Joe Goss

(England), in which Ryan took the prize after eight-seven rounds, was of such interest that demand required that Fox print an edition of 400,000 copies. Fox took the cue and decided to make his paper the leading periodical for prizefighting. He also, not surprisingly, became the promoter for the new champion. Fox well knew that for his readers, who perused his tabloid over a beer or while waiting for a shave, the illustrations were of as much, and probably more, interest than the text. Being able to view an illustration of a prizefight was far more engaging than reading about it, especially if one were pressed for time or did not read well.[65] Images of athletes in the *Gazette* soon took the form of full-page illustrations, separate "supplements" and double-page spreads. Readers wanted to see what the strong white men looked like as much as they wanted to know about "what happened." It is also evident that readers had an appetite for seeing what athletic men look like even when absolutely nothing had happened: illustrations often displayed what the men's bodies looked like, sometimes giving the measurements of specific muscles, for the sole purpose of showing the body. Many images show athletes merely posing, with no news event in sight. The purpose was strictly for the consumer's enjoyment of viewing the muscular male body.

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[65] Although literacy rates were climbing, twenty percent of the population was still illiterate, and the average adult, in a time when most children were working fulltime before they were in their teens, had fewer than five years of schooling.

Of the publications under consideration, it was *The National Police Gazette* that created and chronicled most lucidly the transformation in the presentation of the white male from a participant in athletic contests to an object of visual beauty and a communicator of eroticism and power. As Fox's efforts concentrated on more coverage of boxing and wrestling, it was by way of illustrating these sports that images of the white male began to take on a purely voyeuristic purpose. As the 1880s progressed, the concept of manliness as defined by moral qualities was shouldered aside to make room for a new model, this one having the power to assert white male virility with just a look.

Chapter Three

The White Male Body as Armor

In the 1880s, middle-class and elitist men added to the list of requirements to be met in order to prove manliness, and these new standards were receiving wide and immediate popular approval. The new tests centered on the visual presentation of the white male body and on its credibility as an instrument of speed, strength, and dominance over other men. The idea that men who earned their living with their muscles were the potential physical dominators of the middle and upper men was the stronghold of superior virility for laborers. This stereotypical marker of class—the muscular, laboring body—was now perceived as the possible undoing of the elite strata of society. This led to relaxed attitudes in the middle and upper classes about amateur boxing and wrestling and college athletics opened the way for increased emphasis on strong, shapely bodies as necessary to manliness, including men in Ivy League universities. Readers imbibed more statistics about white men's bodies as well as more historical and scientific pronouncements about racial determinants of culture and social hierarchies. The revision of United States military history by writers who wanted to encourage support for a revitalized navy and for expansion of national

power overseas helped to direct popular opinion towards an enthusiasm for competition with other navies. In international relations, the United States accorded itself a larger, more forceful role as business and government sharpened their focus on overseas markets and well-chosen spots for territorial control, whether for fueling stations or satellites of national defense. Influential popular books about the destiny of the "Anglo-Saxon race" explained history and prognosticated the future as the fulfillment of racial inevitability and divine design. All of these discourses served as means for proselytizing a metaphor of the United States as the ultimate man among men, the glory of humanity and the salvation of the world. Some voiced objections to such an emphasis on athleticism and on large, muscular bodies, but these offered scant resistance to the torrent of interest in the rhetoric, both verbal and visual, of triumphant white masculinity. This chapter focuses on the messages about manhood that were predominant during the 1880s, how they found visual metaphors in a wider array of products, and how those messages fused with fantasies of national destiny.

In the world of professional sports, boxing had become king despite its renown as an unsavory and corrupted practice. The Paddy Ryan (United States) and Joe Goss (England) fight of May 30, 1880, at Collier's Point, West Virginia, which Ryan won after eighty-six rounds, crystallized for Fox the importance of

boxing, of the audience, and of the press. The *Police Gazette* presses ran for weeks to print enough copies of the fight coverage to meet demand.[1] Fox realized that he could use his newspaper as a way to promote fights which he himself would arrange and back financially, making money not only from the sales of his paper but also from proceeds from the fight. In addition, Fox had a staff of artists to illustrate the fights for those who could not be there and to render tangible the visual nature of the contests. The illustration of the May 30 fight depicts Goss and Ryan at the finish, after eighty-six rounds, with Ryan standing upright, looking fresh, strong, and invincible. The defeated Goss is on the ground, propped on his elbows. In its coverage, the *Gazette* gave round-by-round detail until the fifteenth round, and then grouped the rounds into sections until an especially notable action or an injury warranted such description as that given of the men after the seventieth round: "their heads looked like butcher blocks."[2] The *Gazette* illustrated the contest with an image of the two fighters in the ring, bare-fisted, at the moment after Ryan delivered the punch that left Goss lying on the ground. The caption states that this image was "sketched on the spot Specially [sic] for the National Police Gazette." This image was published in June 1880; it portrays the two men stripped to the waist and surrounded by a

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[1] Elliot Gorn and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 115.
[2] *The National Police Gazette*, June 12, 1880, 16.

crowd of white men, most lifting their hats in exultation that Ryan won the fight. The fighters are in the foreground, part of a larger scene that involves the spectators as well; we see the bodies that fought, but their primary reading as white male flesh is camouflaged by the narrative of the fight and by the cheering audience. Thus manliness, coded as white and virile, was "taught" via overt representation, but the lesson was transmitted by a narration of a prizefight. This lesson found expression in countless other *Gazette* narratives as well: other sports, sensationalistic news, the burlesque theater, and crime reporting. The *Gazette* audience was reading stories about boxing matches and consuming the images of the boxers, but the most fundamental impact of the representations of male power did not occur at the level of news. The most elemental role of the images was their cultural function as models and teachers of appropriate gender performance--in this case, the performance of white, what is now termed "heterosexual" masculinity. The irony with respect to heterosexuality lies in the sexuality of those whom Fox anticipated would be viewing the images of male bodies in the *Gazette*: the display of powerful male bodies was directed towards heterosexual white men. As we shall see, during the 1880s the representation of white male bodies as objects for aesthetic and erotic admiration became increasingly prevalent, as illustrations of men doing nothing more than showing off their bodies were interspersed with illustrations of sports events. The bodies

of the fighters advertised upcoming fights as well as created the events themselves. Illustrations of contenders in fighting stance, ostensibly posing for the artist, and flexing their biceps in a sort of "whose are bigger?" advertisement, created interest in the appearances of those bodies.

Fox's self-interest lay in making sure that boxing and wrestling sustained the interest of his readership. By setting up matches and taking on the role of promoter as well as publisher, he helped to create contests that would heighten public interest and increase his own wealth. To this end, he standardized the weight classifications and put up the fight-stakes himself. These measures of regulation and accountability helped boxing to find a place of acceptance among the middle-class and upper class men who condemned bare-fisted fighting but found gloved fights to be an acceptable spectator event.[3] It was not boxing that was beneath these men; it was the free-for-all, no rules, street-gang element from which they sought to distinguish themselves. Gorn notes that before boxing was approved and taken up by middle and upper class men, it constituted a rebellion against bourgeois ideologies of propriety, of gentility, and of the entire "civilizing process." It was a class rebellion against bourgeois morality and rule-following that had no value in the life of the street and the working-class wage earner. It was a way to "be someone," and it offered the possibility of more

[3] Gorn and Goldstein, 119.

money than a laborer could earn otherwise. It provided recreation for poor men and business opportunities for gamblers and saloon-owners, who often organized and sponsored the fights. Boxing belonged to young men whose position in the economy ensured they would be wage-laborers within an increasingly industrialized economic system. Boxers often got their start by making themselves known for being the most fearsome fighter in a street gang, winning name-recognition, and eventually being taken up by promoters and becoming pawns in the gambling industry. The toughest boxers were sources of pride to their neighborhoods, and ethnic pride was linked to these displays of masculinity. More important, however, was their cultural function: boxers were actors who recreated the drama of masculine street life, with its overt "ethos of braggadocio, masculine prowess, and violent defense of honor," distinct from middle-class ways of enacting the same values of masculinity.[4]

Gorn argues that because boxing was a way to repudiate middle-class rules, "circumventing the law to stage a boxing match became an act of cultural independence. Prize fighting implicitly rejected the humanitarian, universalistic, and progressive Victorian worldview…. Thus the legal and ideological battle over the ring was a fight for cultural space, a contest over social legitimation."[5] As Gorn points out, boxing is about male honor, which in this context exists

[4] Gorn, *Manly Art,* 107.

solely in the form of external confirmation. It requires an audience. For the bourgeoisie, success as a man was represented symbolically: wealth, possessions, position, honorable behavior, executive abilities, expertise, and sometimes, the image of the military stood in for masculinity. For other strata of society, boxing conferred recognition of manliness, not only in the ring but also in the sense of restoring validity to men who were denied education, professional opportunities, and legitimate wealth. For these men, boxing "captured the culture of working men who felt dispossessed amidst the Victorian era's optimism."[6] Middle-class rhetoric exalted collegiate sports and condemned boxing, which teemed with "libidinal outpourings."[7]

This, however, was in the process of change. As boxing became more subject to rules, it gained in respectability and hence could be supported and even practiced, on an amateur level, by middle-class and upper-middle-class men.[8] This athletic form represented the male body as a machine of

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[5] Ibid., 107-108.

[6] Gorn, 141, 147.

[7] Gorn and Goldstein, 66.

[8] In the 1860s, the Queensberry rules (named for John Sholto Douglas, marquess of Queenberry), a version of the rules for amateur sparring between gentlemen, had been adopted for professional prize fighting. These rules reformed the boxing ring, instituting regulations about tactics, rounds, the "count," gloves, and the pacing of the match. The rules also permitted the ring to be indoors on a stage, rather than an open-air roped enclosure on the ground. Boxing appeared to be more regulated and controllable, but as Gorn points out, it became more dangerous, because the gloved punches caused more damage, rounds were longer, and a fighter now had ten seconds, instead of the former thirty, to get up. Gorn states that the "Queensberry rules merely pasted a thin veneer of respectability over the brutality." Gorn, 204, 205. (This is the

empowerment, and it was an easy segue from images of powerful working class males to powerful elite males. All it took was workouts in the gym and practice at sport. Even boxing, once excoriated as the pastime of brutes, became the sport of the upper-middle class, as long as the sparring was confined to the athletic club. Theodore Roosevelt took up boxing because of its quotient of "manliness"—it was a demonstration of courage and the willingness to take and give physical punishment to a peer in the defense of one's reputation.[9] The distinction between brutish violence and gentlemanly sparring was founded on the use, or nonuse, of boxing gloves. Bare-knuckle fighting was for street thugs; gloved fighting was a performance of manhood circumscribed by rules and ethics, so elitist doctrine held. The discourse about boxing was transformed into such terms as virility, courage, stamina, quick thinking, physical prowess, and dominance; it had always been the manliest of sports, according to its supporters; now the ranks of supporters were growing. The notion that manliness included the ability to engage in martial arts gained increasing

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same Queensberry whose son was involved with Oscar Wilde, a liaison that led to Wilde being convicted in 1895 of offenses of homosexuality under the Criminal Law Amendment.)

[9] Theodore Roosevelt, both respectable and upper class, had taken up boxing in 1872, at the age of 14, as one of the strategies for building his weak body. He had asthma as a child, and his difficulty in breathing put a strain on his heart. See Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 60-63. Roosevelt defends the sport in his autobiography and reveals that he continued to box throughout his presidency. He also says that among his good friends he counted boxing champions Bob Fitzsimmons and John L. Sullivan. Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (1913. New York: Macmillan, 1914), 42-46.

credence and eventually paved the way for a masculine nationalism that was inherently militaristic and strove for an international role of power.

Although the great majority of professional athletes had little opportunity to acquire the symbolic power of social prestige and wealth, the bodies of those men came to hold symbolic power for those who did have social prestige and wealth. As the press invested physical fitness and white male strength with more and more cultural clout, the representation of the muscular white male grew to have an impact and a complexity of meaning that went far beyond the eroticism of that image. Representations of the strong white male body became the iconography of cultural power, a power that was exercised by the confluence of maleness, Anglo-Saxonism, physical strength, and heterosexuality. This is not to say that the erotic element was eliminated from the visual rhetoric of power--far from it. Rather, the confluence of the other elements came to constitute an erotic spectacle that was exhibited under the guise of sports, strength performances, and military display. A sampling of images from the decade shows the transformation of the white male body from its use in the service of sports illustration to its function as an emblem of white masculinity that held sexual appeal to men as well as to women. The verbal and visual discourses were gradually being saturated with adulatory images and articles about the white male body. The press in general helped to make commonplace the deluge

of images of boxing and of other sports, and an elitist interest in Italian Renaissance aesthetics--sculpture, painting, decorative arts, and architecture--paved the way for the entrance of the classical in other cultural venues.[10] This surge of energy towards the academic ideal in painting and sculpture, called the "American Renaissance," was aided by elitist notions of preserving Western "high" culture and by the weight of classical education in the Ivy League. Elitist insistence on continuity with the past spilled over into the world of bourgeois sports ideology, beliefs about class construction, and illustrations in periodicals. A growing consumerism, fed by new printing technology that permitted mass distribution of images, combined to nurture the growth of spectator sports and the acceptance of the male body as a commodity to be visually consumed.

The white male body as commodity and as a visual lesson in manliness permeated the *Gazette.* Many illustrations showed boxers in fighting stance, supposedly in the ring, indicated by the ropes strung between two poles behind the boxer. It is during this time that Fox started to publish more images of athletes who are portrayed as much for masculine display as for their athleticism. In 1881, for instance, Fox published an illustration of wrestlers Clarence Whistler and William Muldoon in a mirror-like configuration (fig. 3.1). Both men are

[10] See Baigell, *A Concise History of American Painting and Sculpture* .

stripped to the waist. Each man raises one arm in order to flex his massive biceps while pressing the fingers of the opposite hand into the armpit of the

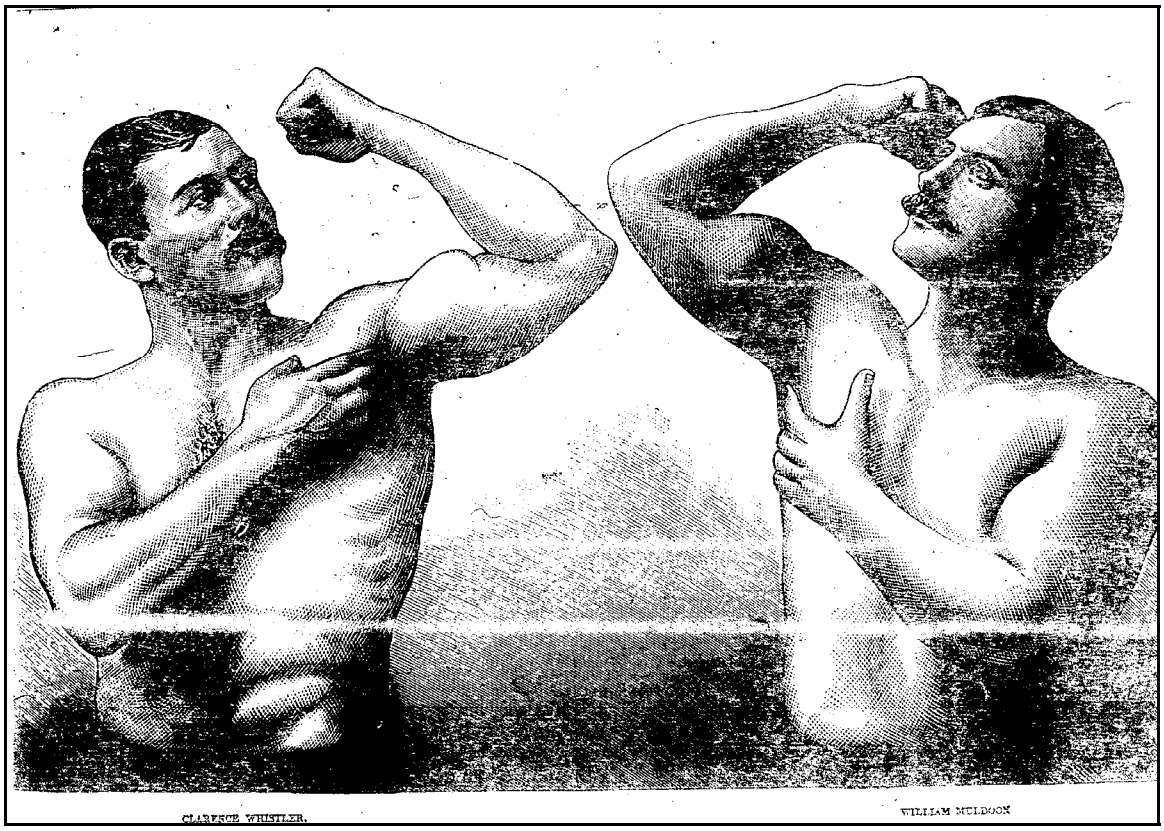

Fig. 3.1. Wrestlers and strength-performers Clarence Whistler and William Muldoon displaying their biceps. *National Police Gazette*, January 15, 1881: 4.

raised arm, forcing the biceps of the lowered arm to be pressed hard against the ribcage, thus exaggerating their size. The *Gazette* readership was treated to this image for the sole purpose of admiring and being impressed by the sheer bulk and muscularity of these men. For Fox, the image functioned as a promotion of the wrestling match; for the viewer, the image was the current benchmark of white masculinity. The picture is captioned "The contestants in the forthcoming

Graeco-Roman wrestling match for the championship of the world."[11] The illustration does not pretend to illustrate a match as an excuse to glorify these men's bodies; it is a beefcake image, plain and simple.

Wrestling and boxing matches paved the way for another kind of athletic exhibition: the strength performance. Whistler and Muldoon were pitted against each other in wrestling matches, but they also wrestled in cooperation with each other, in exhibition matches. They added to their act a man named Richard A. Pennell, called in the *Gazette*'s picture caption, "the modern Sampson, [sic] now with Muldoon and Whistler's Athletic Combination." The accompanying paragraph, which takes up one-sixth the space of the image, tells us that Pennell is "probably the strongest athlete in America," and that the Combination is "making a tour through the South."[12] Muldoon and Whistler were making their living by performing wrestling matches at which they would invite members of the audience to attempt to wrestle with them and to outdo them in feats of strength. A few weeks before the illustration of Pennell was published, the *Gazette* ran a picture of Muldoon and Whistler in an exhibition of wrestling. The

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[11] *National Police Gazette*, Jan. 15, 1881, 4. Muldoon and Whistler appeared again in the *Gazette* in December, this time in an illustration of one of their "exhibitions of wrestling," which were shows of strength and ability. Anyone in the audience was invited, with a prize of $100, to throw one of the men.

[12] *The National Police Gazette*, Dec. 24, 1881, 4.

paragraph that goes with this image tells that the men had recently performed in Memphis, where they performed feats of strength

> with a bar of iron weighing one hundred and forty-five pounds. Although strong men in the audience attempted, without success, to manipulate this bar, they [Muldoon and Whistler] did so easily, not only with their hands but also with their teeth. This followed exhibitions of wrestling which served to show the vast muscular strength and agility of the men.[13]

Thus the press played a crucial role in the representation and reinforcement of gender image and performance. Because of the availability of cheap publications, men who never saw Muldoon and Whistler perform live, for example, could see an artist's rendition of their contests and read about "their vast muscular strength."

John L. Sullivan becomes a celebrity

The boxer who in inhabited the public imagination most fully was John L. Sullivan (fig. 3.2). In 1880, Sullivan had challenged Paddy Ryan to a match. Ryan had turned him down, not wanting to bother with someone with no reputation. Sullivan, a thug with a bad temper who had difficulty staying employed, proceeded to make a name for himself as a boxer. In 1881, Muldoon, who was a friend of Fox, went to Boston and saw twenty-three-year-old Sullivan fight. Muldoon brought Sullivan back to New York, where Sullivan insulted Fox

by turning down his invitation to join him at his table in a restaurant. Fox, determined to humiliate Sullivan, backed Paddy Ryan for a $5,000 stake to fight Sullivan. This match took place on February 7, 1882, at Mississippi City, Mississippi. Sullivan beat Ryan, but this, too, worked in Fox's favor, for no matter who was contesting Sullivan's supremacy, men who followed boxing would be picking up a copy of the *Gazette*. Fox ran a full-page supplement illustration, a gimmick he used frequently to make his tabloid more enticing. The image depicts Ryan and Sullivan shaking hands before the match and is captioned, "A hand shake that preceded some of the hardest blows on record."[14] This image reiterates four traits of the new manliness: maleness, whiteness, strength, and eligibility for dominance. Ryan and Sullivan are shaking with their right hands, but their left hands are clenched as if ready to deliver a blow. Their torsos are naked and hard. Biceps and forearms bulge, and Sullivan's face expresses his belligerence: he can hardly hold himself back from that first punch. In similar fashion, at the end of the year, Fox ran an image of Tom Allen, "the famous pugilist, to be backed against John L. Sullivan by the 'Police Gazette' for the pugilistic championship."[15] Allen is shown in a fighting stance adopted by most boxers for publication, a stance that constitutes a portrait of the boxer's

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[13]Ibid.
[14]*The National Police Gazette*, v. 39, no. 230, Feb. 18, 1882, Supplement.
[15]*The National Police Gazette*, v. 41, no. 272, Dec. 9, 1882, 5.

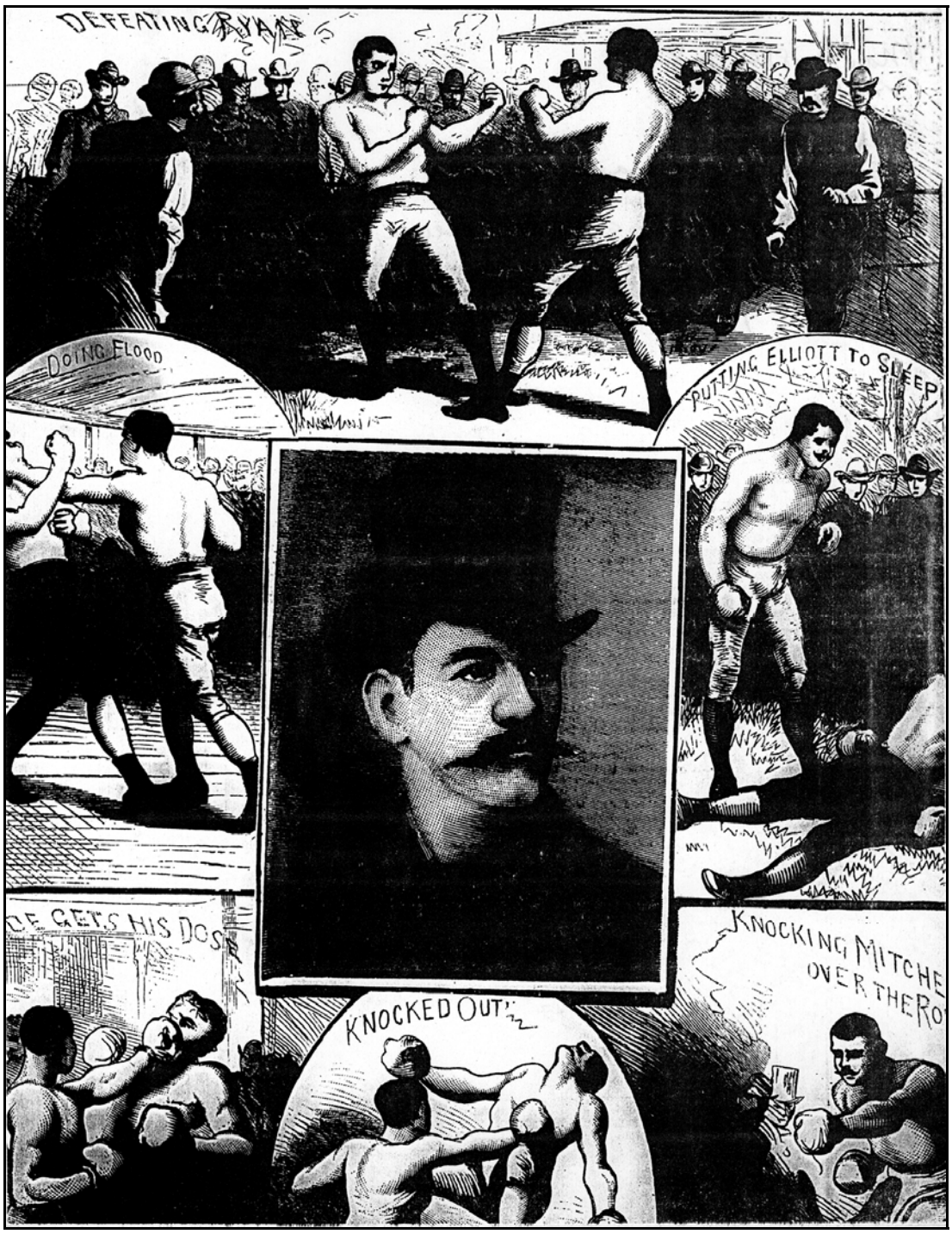

Fig. 3.2. "The Career of a Champion—muscle and pluck's invincible record, as illustrated by the victories of John L. Sullivan—fighting for glory and gain in many fields, and winning in all." *National Police Gazette*, March 1, 1884, 336.

muscular body rather than an illustration of boxing technique. Similar images were pervasive in the *Gazette*, surfacing again and again among images of women, crime, and fighting dogs. The illustration of Jake Kilrain is typical of this genre (fig. 3.3).

Such celebrity boxers as John L. Sullivan, Jake Kilrain, and James "Gentleman Jim" Corbett were in the news so frequently that it would have been hard not to know who they were, even if one had no interest in boxing. Sullivan achieved a level of celebrity in boxing that made it possible for him to supplement his livelihood by expanding his role as an entertainer. He traveled the burlesque circuit, for example, appearing in variety shows where he challenged the house to a match and posed as a living imitation of classical statuary. Throughout the eighties he did road tours; in a tour of the nation in 1883-84, the group of entertainers "was on the road for 238 days and made 195 appearances in 26 states."[16] Sullivan became an icon of white manhood, even for those who condemned his brutality, alcoholism, and promiscuity. He was not the only athlete to astound audiences with his miming of famous sculptures, but until Eugen Sandow made his entrance in the United States in the early 1890s, Sullivan was the most famous. Because the display of athletic male bodies was

[16] Gorn, 221.

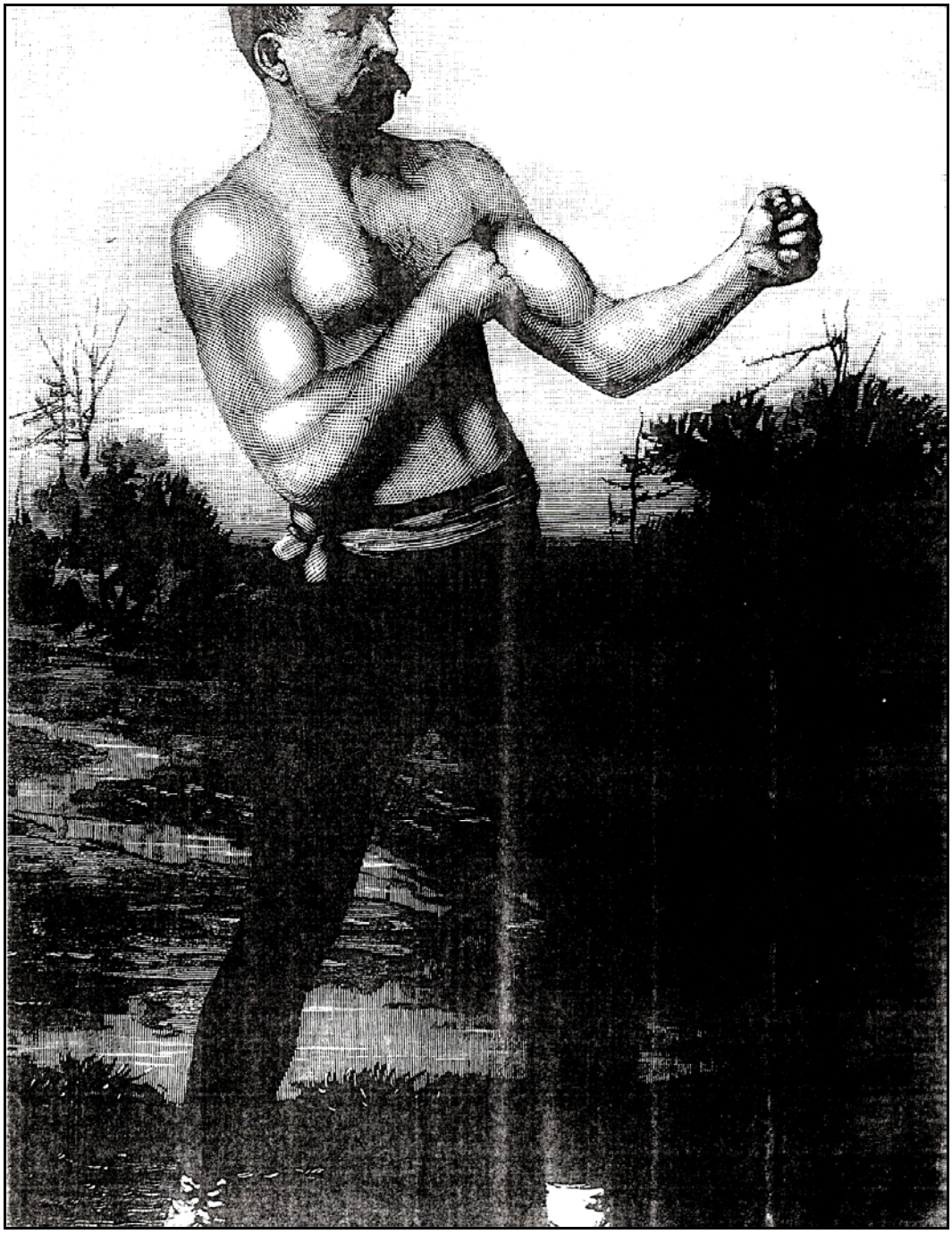

Fig. 3.3. "Jake Kilrain, the well-known pugilist who has posted two hundred and fifty dollars forfeit with the 'Police Gazette' to meet Dominic McCaffrey for two thousand five hundred dollars a side." *National Police Gazette*, Dec. 25, 1886: 13.

legitimated by its purpose--the recreation of Greek and Roman statues--bourgeois culture could accept nearly nude white males as imitations of sculpture rather than as a shocking and gratuitous display of flesh. Not all imitations of statuary were acceptable, however, as the next *Gazette* illustration makes clear . This image exemplifies the improper display of the white male body: the wrong place, the wrong time, and the wrong audience. This image is captioned, "He wanted to be a statue. An unknown crank in a state of nature makes a great artistic sensation in the Rotunda of the Capitol, Washington, D.C."[17] (However, it is precisely because of the transgressions of the etiquette of masculine display that this "story" was deemed worthy of illustration. It serves no purpose other than to startle and amuse. The police officer protects the reader, not the viewers in the picture, from seeing the man's genitals. The cloth he holds up to shield us provides a backdrop for the viewers in the image, which would have made the man's figure even *more* visible to them.)

Serving to underscore the gendered and racialized dominance of these men were the images of female burlesque performers, female pugilists, male African-American boxers, and white men in situations of masochistic passivity. These images showed that variant subject positions were available in society, and that these subject positions served to reinforce the ideology of white male

[17]*The National Police Gazette*, May 29, 1886, 4.

supremacy; they illustrated all that the dominant model was not. Even where those images represent physical strength, the strength of the individual being portrayed is undercut by the person's social position, by virtue of sex, race, or subordinate positioning within the narrative of the image. The *Gazette*'s focus on show business meant that female burlesque entertainers were given prominent display; they showed readers the forms that hyper-femininity might take, defining what was not masculine. Figure 3.4 is a detail from an image of three women on stage just before they begin their performance. Their hair is elaborately styled, and they are dressed in tight, low-cut costumes that push up their breasts, cinch their waists, and end in a tutu midway down their thighs. The pendants on their necklaces draw the eye to the cleavage of their breasts, and emphasizing the lesson in fragility and lightness, the women are wearing what look to be size-proportionate dragonfly wings.[18] The story they illustrate is the story of the social construction of gender, in this case, erotic fantasies of delicacy and vulnerability. These women were off-limits to the reader, but they were even more off-limits to the imaginary men in the audience. The reader is being offered a view of the entertainers behind the curtain, which is denied to the imaginary audience. The full image shows another vignette that portrays two

[18] These costumes were not unique to the late nineteenth century. They had been used in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and in the early twenty-first century, lingerie boutiques and sexual-paraphernalia stores still sell this type of outfit. Angel wings are available as well.

white men wearing stern expressions, standing in front of the curtain; the caption reads, "Bouncing the mashers before the rise of the curtain." Thus, before a man in the "audience" can interact with the women, he has to prove himself in a fistfight with the bounces, a challenge that heightens the erotic fantasy.[19] Other such images as these, which served as visual emphasis for the images of strong white males, appeared regularly in the *Gazette*. Even images of female competitive athletes underscored male dominance; neither stereotypically "feminine" nor competitive with males in any given sport, these athletic women's bodies and clothing were another way to underscore the greater strength, size, and physical abilities of the men. The incessant message was "difference." Other visual tools were available as well for the placement of varying representations along the gender continuum. White masculinity was defined not only as difference from women, but from men who exhibited too many traits that were prescribed for women (especially in the company of other men) and from men who were classified as racially or ethnically other than Anglo-Saxon or Irish. Sometimes race and ethnicity were the same. At other times, they were not. The ethnic classification ballooned and shrank depending upon who was being juxtaposed to it and the level of power under discussion.

[19] *National Police Gazette*, Dec. 11, 1880, 8, 9.

Fig. 3.4. Performers wait backstage before the curtain rises. *National Police Gazette*, December 11, 1880: 8, 9.

Male dominance and race

The image of the white male body as the symbol of supremacy communicated a meaning that distinguished it from the female body. The issue is complicated by the cultural rendering of other male bodies as female, not literally, but in relation to the muscular and virile white male. The image of the strong white male connotes cultural power over women but also over a host of other images of men. Men evinced manliness in a variety of ways and also over a range of degrees of manliness. The image of the powerful white man implied that he was "more man" than men defined as belonging in categories of ethnicity, race, class, and sexual orientation to which the "real man" did not appear to belong. These distinctions hardened further during the 1880s and became more forceful over the next two decades as Jim Crow laws vitiated the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments, lynching became more frequent, and the United States shaped its course with respect international relations. Buttressing the ideology of the white male as the apex of the human race and of civilization was the increasingly visible "fact" of the white male as living, breathing armor. The illustrations of John L. Sullivan, "The latest and more lifelike portrait of the world's champion pugilist," published in July 1885, and "One Less Brute," published in October of that year, make plain the *Gazette*'s editorial stance on racial equality (fig. 3.5). This is not the only way the *Gazette*

represented African-American men; occasionally, Fox published a picture of a black boxer, but boxing was racially segregated, and minority boxers rarely made it into the pages of the *Gazette*. The illustration of the lynched man features a note said to have been found in the "negro's pocket." It says, "Not to be taken down by any one but the Corener [sic] / You are the brute you are the one."[20] In analyzing the reversal of the discourse of white moral superiority that Ida B. Wells conceptualized in light of lynching, Bederman argues that the white "myth of the black rapist" reinforced the ideology of white male self-restraint and discipline, the necessary condition for civilization. The prevalence of this myth in the white imagination was part of the technology of white identity (civilized) and of identity as a white *man* (the most civilized) as well as a product of the "new attention to sexuality" that was being given to issues of gender and race distinctions.[21] The representation of race in the *Gazette* operated within the

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[20]*The National Police Gazette*, V. 47, No. 424, Oct. 31, 1885, 12. This picture was published during a time of evisceration of the postbellum amendments to the Constitution. In 1882, in *U.S. v. Harris*, the Supreme Court held that federal laws pertaining to murder and assault were unconstitutional and that those crimes were to be under the purview of the state. The next year, the Court invalidated the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which was intended to implement the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments. The Act had made it a misdemeanor to deny any person equal rights and privileges in inns, theaters and amusement places, and transportation facilities, regardless of color or previous conditions of servitude. With these decisions, the Court said that Congress may not make laws pertaining to civil rights unless it is as a corrective to a state law that violates the Constitution, a decision that vitiated the principle of equal protection. African Americans had had no state law recourse to sue for discrimination; now they had no federal recourse, either. Alpheus Thomas Mason and William M. Beaney, *American Constitutional Law: Introductory Essays and Selected Cases*, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 379-80, 399-405.

[21] See Bederman, op cit., 45-76.

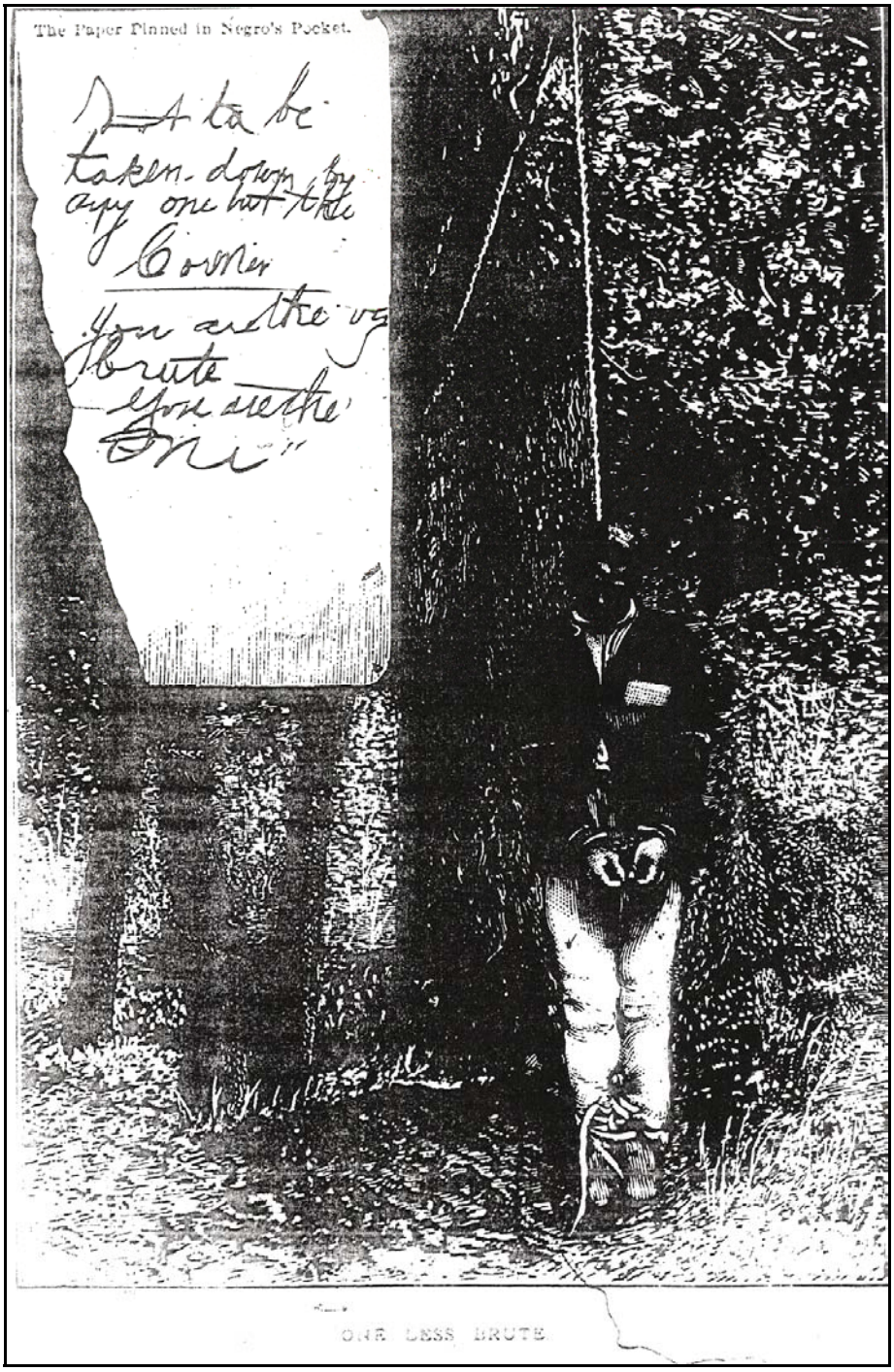

Fig. 3.5. "One Less Brute. His Honor Justice Lynch does up a Tuckerman, Ark., Negro violator," *National Police Gazette*, Oct. 31, 1885: 12.

cultural dialectic that prevails when a dominant group holds mutually exclusive beliefs about itself--in this case, the indomitability of white men, and its opposite, the fragility of white power. On one hand, out of the repetitive images of white male athletes would burst an image like "One Less Brute." On the other hand, lest Fox's readership grow complacent that nothing could upset their world order, once in a while *Gazette* readers would turn the page to such an image as "Harry Woodson, the 'Black Diamond' of Cincinnati" (1883), "C.A.C. Smith, the Colored Heavyweight Pugilist" (1883), whom John L. Sullivan refused to fight (fig. 3.6), "Matsada Sorakichi, the Japanese Athlete" (1886), and "Harris Martin, The Black Pearl, a famous boxer of St. Paul, Minnesota" (1887)[22] White *Gazette* readers were no doubt reassured by such images as the wrestling match between Sorakichi and Evan Lewis, 1886, titled "Cruel Cowardice." However, the match between heavyweights Peter Jackson, an African Australian, and Jem Smith, a white Briton, in November, 1889 told another story. Jackson won this fight, which is illustrated across two pages, and the next week Fox ran a large portrait of him titled "The Invincible Peter Jackson." Jackson stares at reader, his arms crossed over his chest, and "invincible" is the only way to describe him.[23]

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[22]*Gazette*, V. 49, No. 484, Dec. 25, 1886, 13; V. 41, No. 289, April 7, 1883, 4; V. 42, No. 306, Aug. 4, 1883, 13; V. 47, No. 439, Feb. 13, 1886, 9; V. 50, No. 507, June 4, 1887, 13.
[23] *Gazette,* V. 47, No. 442, March 6, 1886, 5; V. 55, No. 637, Nov. 23, 1889, 8-9.

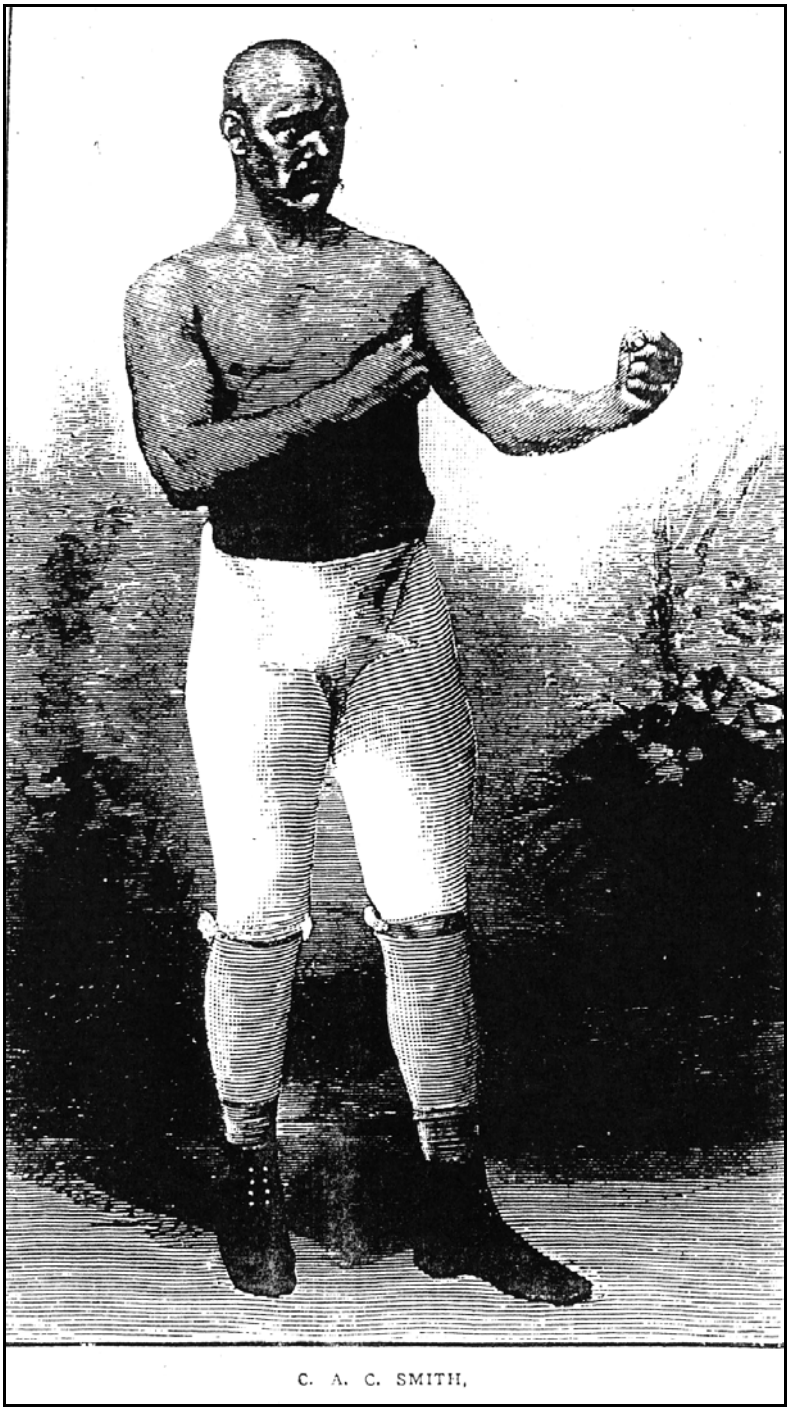

Fig. 3.6. "C.A.C. Smith. The colored heavyweight pugilist, who is anxious to meet Sullivan or any other man." *National Police Gazette*, August 4, 1883: 13.

The extent to which white men's anxiety about the power and virility of black men had pervaded the dominant culture is seen in other cultural worlds, as well. In 1887, for instance, Edward Atkinson wrote a letter to the editor of *Science* to report his findings in response to a query about the veracity of the impression in England that white men were deteriorating in relation to black men. In his letter, Atkinson refuted this idea based on statistics from several clothiers, who reported that on the contrary white men were getting bigger. This anxiety about dominance extended beyond domestic racial comparisons and extended to international competition, for Atkinson ends his letter with a plea for information about the size of European men.[24] Samuel Morton had been obsessed with finding that white males have the biggest skulls. Now the imperative for white males to be superior had extended to the entire body. The

[24] Edward Atkinson, "The American Physique," *Science: An Illustrated Journal* v. 10, no. 249, Nov. 11, 1887, 239-40. Atkinson (1827-1905) was a Boston cotton manufacturer, insurance executive, tariff-reformer, gold-standard proponent, writer, anti-imperialist, economist, statistician, inventor, speaker, and consultant to numerous members of Congress and presidential cabinets. His letter concerns an inquiry about the impression in Europe that "the white man is deteriorating in size, weight, and condition in the United States." Atkinson had contacted eight clothiers for information on the sizes of men's clothing that were most in demand and reported average body-measurements from each contact. One clothier said, "'so far as relates to the assertion that the race in this country deteriorates, our experience teaches us that the contrary is the case.'" Another said that since the war, suits had increased an inch around the chest and waist. Atkinson asked the clothier if that was because "the colored people had become buyers of ready-made clothing, but have for reply that the fact that the negroes [sic] are buying more ready-made clothing now . . . accounts in only a small degree for the increase of the size, but is due [sic] almost entirely to the increased physical activity on the part of the whites." He closes with the query, "Cannot some one [sic] obtain data for comparison with these sizes from the statistics of military recruits and conscripts in Europe, or from the contractors for army clothing?"

embracement of physical fitness, encouraged by the incentive of anthropometry, was hardly surprising given the beliefs in neurasthenia, and more distressingly, fears about sexual impotence. To defeat these maladies, the armored white male, his own body constituting the armor, became the standard for white manhood. Given the contradiction between the declamations about their own superiority and the fears that they were in reality a decadent population, it seems that middle-class and elite men were ready to believe that if they exercised enough and if they remembered the importance of the "spermatic economy,"[25] then they would ensure their rightful place in the world hierarchy. Like the racial images that boast of white male superiority and yet proclaim nothing so much as insecurity and fear, the *Gazette*'s classified advertising speaks to a similar psychological hollowness about sexual performance. Numerous advertisements reveal that despite page after page of strong white men reassuring readers of the

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He wanted to know if white males in the U.S. were bigger or smaller than their counterparts in Europe, i.e., were white American men the biggest men of all, was the real question.

[25]G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1977), chapter 15. Barker-Benfield details men's anxieties about conserving semen in order to protect their strength--sperm loss causing a loss of energy and virility--a belief about masculine ability that is evident in numerous advice manuals from this time. Sylvester Graham in the 1830s had promulgated the notion of masturbation causing debilities of all sorts, and eventually, death. Sexual hygiene advice for married men focused on limiting sexual intercourse to specific intervals: once a week, once a month, etc. For unmarried men, intercourse was taboo. Interestingly, the Indian wrestlers, of whom we have seen illustrations in the previous chapter, believed the same thing and took this belief to what seems to be extremes. They were not allowed to look at women or to live among animals, in case the animals copulated and excited the men to orgasm. Semen was considered sacred to the Indian wrestlers; apparently, to judge from the advertisements for sexual restoratives and the reigning wisdom about infrequent sex,

stability of gender as well as of racial hierarchies, *Gazette* readers were beset with anxieties about their sexual potency.[26] Ostensibly interested in sports, sex with women, gambling, horse races, chasing down criminals, and other such manly (i.e., defined as heterosexual) pursuits, many readers were apparently consumed with anxieties and guilt about sex. "Manhood Restored" was the mantra for these advertising pages. Fears and guilt about "youthful indiscretions," "self-abuse," and "over-indulgence," were easy targets for an industry of sexual restoratives and appliances, developed and sold by individuals calling themselves doctors, chemists, and professors. Inability to copulate was the most fundamental fear and the most pervasive disability addressed. The ads promised cures for lost manhood, premature decay, debility, fits, lack of nerve force, weakness, rupture, seminal discharge, nervous exhaustion, depression, impotence, and the loss of physical and mental powers generally. Any condition brought about by youthful errors, imprudence, ignorance, vice, and excesses could be reversed and eliminated by the various tonics and belts that were available, so the sellers claimed. Ads called out to "Young Men," "Men: Young and Old," "Weak, Nervous Men," men who needed their "Manhood Restored,"

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including with one's spouse, being the best policy, it held nearly the same status in the United States.

[26] The classified advertising in the *Gazette* announced products that would restore lost manhood and treatments from men who advertised themselves as medical doctors (and may have been

promising recovery of full manhood, health and sexual vigor. However, wanting to reach all markets and sell advertising space to all buyers, alongside the pitches for restoring sexual function lost to overindulgence Fox ran ads for pornographic books, pictures, cards, watch charms, glasses for microscopic photographs, and other pornographic aids, items which, one would think, would lead only to even more spermatorrhea for the debilitated men who were desperately seeking to recover their virility. Occasionally, women wanting to get married thought to use this section as a way to reach single men. For example, on October 1, 1887, nestled between ads for sexual novelties was an ad that proclaimed "Husband Wanted." Interested parties were to write to the Climax Publishing Company.[27]

The classified pages in the *Gazette* were by no means the only place that men who doubted their virility could find help. Doctors and fitness advocates recommended exercise regimens as a way to increase energy, vitality, attractiveness, and productivity. George Beard had defined the malaise of the middle class as "neurasthenia," or nervous exhaustion, in 1869, expanding the diagnostic reach of a term already in use. He refined the clinical description of the disease and used the term as a classification for a constellation of mental and physical ailments that curtailed the ability of the possessors of the condition to

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such), to cure "spermatorrhoea, or seminal weakness and "venereal and syphilitic maladies." *National Police Gazette* classified advertising for 1870-1900.

[27] *Gazette*, V. LI, No. 524, Oct. 1, 1887.

function. One of its chief physical symptoms was chronic fatigue; its chief mental symptom was depression.[28] His book, *American Nervousness*, published in 1881, established the condition as endemic to the middle and upper classes and brought awareness of the term into popular discourse. Beard and other such doctors as S. Weir Mitchell, who during the war had worked in a Union hospital for nervous diseases and had become an expert on nerve injuries,[29] and Horatio Wood, professor of nervous diseases at the University of Pennsylvania, tended to treat the condition with therapies elaborated from two paradigms: patients were given either a regimen of rest or one of physical activity. Women were advised to rest. This is hardly surprising, given that one of the five characteristics of the modern world that Beard held responsible for neurasthenia was "the mental activity of women."[30] Charlotte Perkins Gilman relates in *The Yellow Wallpaper* the experience of being locked in a room for extended bed rest, with not even reading being permitted. With this therapy, doctors often advised women to

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[28] Beard, George. "Neurasthenia, or Nervous Exhaustion." *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 80 (1869), 245-59 and *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1881). See also F. G. Gosling, *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870-1910* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987).
[29] Hillel Schwartrz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets*, … 72.

[30] George M. Beard, "Causes of American Nervousness" in *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences*, quoted in *Popular Culture and Industrialism 1865-1890*, ed. Henry Nash Smith (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 57-70. Beard said that " 'the causes of American nervousness are complicated, but are not beyond analysis: First of all modern civilization . . .. The modern differ [sic] from the ancient civilizations mainly in these five elements—steam power, the periodical press, the telegraph, the sciences, and the mental activity of women. When

have their children with them at all times, an astonishingly counterproductive piece of advice.

Conversely, doctors advised men to become more active, spend time outdoors, and engage in physical work in order to find more energy and to regain a sense of purpose. Some men, Theodore Roosevelt, Owen Wister, and Thomas Eakins, among others, took a sabbatical from work and went to live on a ranch. Interestingly, doctors did not advise the men to have their children with them at all times. This gender-determined diagnosis drew on and exacerbated medical and cultural beliefs about the "nature" and capacities of people according to their gonads. Thus, countless articles were written about the pernicious effect that higher education and strenuous exercise had on women, while others addressed the importance of regular strenuous exercise for men and its power to regenerate intellectual abilities and moral virtues. The medical profession held that strenuous exercise (and higher education) would divert the reproductive energy of women and make them infertile. Again, conversely, doctors did not theorize that exercise for men would deplete the energies needed for impregnation. For men, exercise would restore mental health, improve intelligence, increase their productivity at their jobs, cleanse their morals,

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civilization, plus these five factors, invades any nation, it must carry nervousness and nervous diseases along with it.' " Smith, 57-58.

enhance their appearance, make them more powerful, and, no doubt, turn them into more prolific reproducers.

Paradoxically, it would seem, given the emphasis placed on compulsory motherhood, some doctors were endorsing and performing castration on women, then called "ovariotomy." Barker-Benfield notes that such castrations were fairly common with some doctors after the 1880s; the purposes of these surgeries were not, however, so much reproductive as they were behavioral. Castrations were performed to cure such ills as masturbation, sexual desire, insanity, epilepsy, melancholia, and disorderly behavior in general. Not all doctors agreed with this practice; some argued strongly for more conservative surgeries.[31] Deborah Kuhn McGregor writes that ovariotomy, originally developed through experimentation on women in order to remove ovarian tumors and cysts, was always a highly controversial practice, not least because of the high mortality rate. The procedure was performed even more widely after Robert Battey published articles in the seventies about the new uses for the surgery. "Battey's Operation" removed ovaries that were healthy. He theorized that the ovaries were the cause of "nervous emotions" and mental illnesses as well as of painful menstruation. McGregor states that in 1893, a ward in a

[31] G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life* , xxiii-xxvii and Chapter 11, "Sexual Surgery," 120-132.

Pennsylvania hospital for the insane was established for women to be castrated.[32] A doctor writing for the *American Journal of Insanity* said that the surgery was justified because "an insane woman is no more a member of the body politic than a criminal," her death is a relief to her family, and if she recovers from her mental illness, she will likely have insane children.

As the symbolic meaning of the strong white male seeped further into middle-class culture, the 1880s saw two important changes in the portrayal of that symbol. Men who had not hitherto shown interest in the appearance of the male body began to alter themselves and their own visual rhetoric by changing their bodies. Despite professed elitist scorn for professional boxing and adulation of college football (a distinction that served to reinforce class hierarchy between the street and the university), the upper classes were neither unaware of nor immune to changing standards for masculine physicality. One change was in the sheer size of the embodiment: the white males in the *National Police Gazette* became more massive as size and symmetry themselves became distinct areas of competition. The message about white male dominance was being broadcast not only by the news stories about what athletes did; even more important were the images that revealed how they looked. In fact, the visual message about

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[32] Deborah Kuhn McGregor, *Sexual Surgery and the Origins of Gynecology: J. Marion Sims, His Hospital, and His Patients* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 310. See. Ch. 8, "Ovariotomy," 290-319.

muscular, combative white males was becoming even more important than the verbal information about their athletic exploits.

Another critical change which occurred in the illustrated periodical press in the 1880s was the illustration of the muscular white male on college campuses, where athletics and an awareness of how white men look in minimal clothing were taking the collegiate imagination by storm. The belief in the strength of Anglo-Saxonism and the concomitant fear for its life in the United States provided the impetus for the commingling of academics and physical fitness. No longer was the college student to be devoted solely to books and to personal advancement. The popularity of *Tom Brown's School Days* and of the adventure romances[33] had incited in boys the notion that a life of daring, risk, physical exploits, danger, and executive ability was the life to be lived. Fantasies of physical prowess and endurance, challenges overcome, and the dream of command eclipsed all other models of masculinity. During the 1880s, amidst the furor over the inclusion of athletics in collegiate life--was it the adulteration of lofty academics by vulgar sports, or was it the injection of a shot of vigor and

[33] Lawyer and social reformer Thomas Hughes had published *Tom Brown's School Days* in 1857, a fictional account of life in an English public school which portrayed boys and their way of life at school: friendships, moral lessons, shenanigans, and overwhelmingly, sports. The book was hugely successful and influential in galvanizing the interest in sports generally and especially in private schools in the U.S. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1857). For an enlightening discussion of the adventure romances and the historical novels of the late nineteenth century, see Amy Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire: The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s," *American Literary History*, 2, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 659-690.

virility into unmanly academics? --the notion of manhood and leadership came to be equated with physical prowess, athletic achievement, and corporeal impressiveness along with its previous definition of a racial, class-based manliness.

Ivy League sport, anthropometry, and Dudley Allen Sargent

The college campus proved to be a hotbed for the growth of athletics and the cult of the white male body. Once the middle and upper classes caught the enthusiasm for male display, the body offered another way for students and colleges to compete. George Windship had made gymnastics a part of his daily routine while he was at Harvard in the fifties as a way to be physically competitive and had been committed to strength training for the rest of his life. Since his student days, the physical fitness and exercise had undergone a radical change. Beginning in the 1880s, sports were as much a part of college life as academics. Popular support for collegiate sports grew rapidly, despite protest from some voices, especially those of some college faculty, as students and administrations focused their interest on intramural and intercollegiate contests, leaving behind the rationale of "physical education."[34] Football became

[34] In 1885, the faculty at Harvard voted 25-4 for the abolition of football. No one was listening. The interest in athletics and physical education had a grip on the imaginations of too many. In the same year the American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education was founded, and between 1883 and 1887, the number of YMCAs with athletic facilities grew from 68 to 168. John Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage, 1850-1950* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1974) 105-108.

identified with the Ivy League and proved to be a remarkably social force, by the century's end uniting the student body as nothing else had ever done. Repetitive exercise was replaced by team sports at women's colleges as well as at men's schools, although the debate about bearing children continued for some time. Despite women's participation in sports, the media clung to the term "manly sports" as another way to exhort young men to be physically assertive. Initially justified by claims of improving the fitness of the average college man, and thereby uplifting the mental and moral standards of college life, physical training soon became a matter of intercollegiate victories in team sports, another venue for men to enact dramas of honor, reputation, and physical domination. Some colleges strove to be recognized for the best gymnasia and the best teams; the men who could contribute to athletic victories for the schools received attention and funding. Competitive sports were so popular and so exclusionary that even some of those who whole-heartedly supported college athletics lamented the attention paid to such contests.[35] Colleges and universities justified the inclusion of athletics as part of student life by adopting and lending their weight to several contemporary discourses: medicine, racism, nationalism, elitism, and the romance with masculinity all had a part to play.

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[35] William Blaikie, "American Bodies," in *Harper's Weekly,* V. 27, No. 1406, Dec. 1, 1883, 770 and Dudley Allen Sargent, "The Physical Proportions of the Typical Man," *Scribner's Magazine*, V. II,

Because of the attention given to sports in the media, the general public and college students themselves were primed to look with favor upon college athletics. In the 1880s, rowing and baseball were more popular than football, and one of the most avidly followed contests was that of competitive walking; nonetheless, the hottest debates about the appropriateness of sports in the university centered on football, largely because of its brutality. In the spirit of the popular enthusiasm, in 1881 *Harper's Weekly* ran a double-spread image of a college game. The image is one of barely controlled mayhem, but two players stand out. Struggling for possession of the ball, they are starkly highlighted against the other players, their broad shoulders and muscular buttocks and thighs clearly delineated and just as clearly sending the message of white male strength in the Ivy League (fig. 3.7).[36] The football moment permits the viewer a voyeuristic study of the backsides of two young athletes. This kind of activity, condemned as both ungentlemanly and as unrelated to academic, civic, and moral pursuits, found its defense and salvation in classical history and in the misty, noble ideal of the amateur athlete, an inherently elitist and exclusive moral and social echelon.

No. 1, July 1887, 3-17. Both writers criticize the emphasis on competition and the resources expended on the best athletes, while those who need exercise more are ignored.

[36] *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. XXV 1298, Nov. 5, 1881. 744 -745.

To answer the critics who said that sports in the university were unnecessary, ungentlemanly, and a violation of intellectual and moral aspirations and of a classical education, sports enthusiasts invoked the examples of athletics in ancient Greece and Rome. Thomas Wentworth Higginson had referred to Pythagoras and Cleanthes in "Saints, and Their Bodies" (1858) as men who were pugilists as well as great thinkers.[37] In *Wonders of Bodily Strength and Skill,* Depping had devoted two chapters to wrestling and boxing in ancient Greece. Sports, it was argued, instilled qualities of courage, decisiveness, leadership, and an instinct for action in battle. The upper classes defined ancient Greece and Rome as the apotheosis of civilization and the foundation of European culture. By definition as being of classical lineage, then, sports should be a part of college life, along with the classes in Greek and Latin. Defenders of athletics invoked the ideal of the amateur athlete, the Greek Olympiads who put heart and soul into a sport for the sheer thrill of competition and love of excellence, giving their all and asking nothing in return. Depping states that Greek athletes had "one aim—to carry off the reward of the victor." The victor in a contest, who won a crown made of leaves, "considered a reward which was

[37] Higginson, "Saints and Their Bodies," 583.

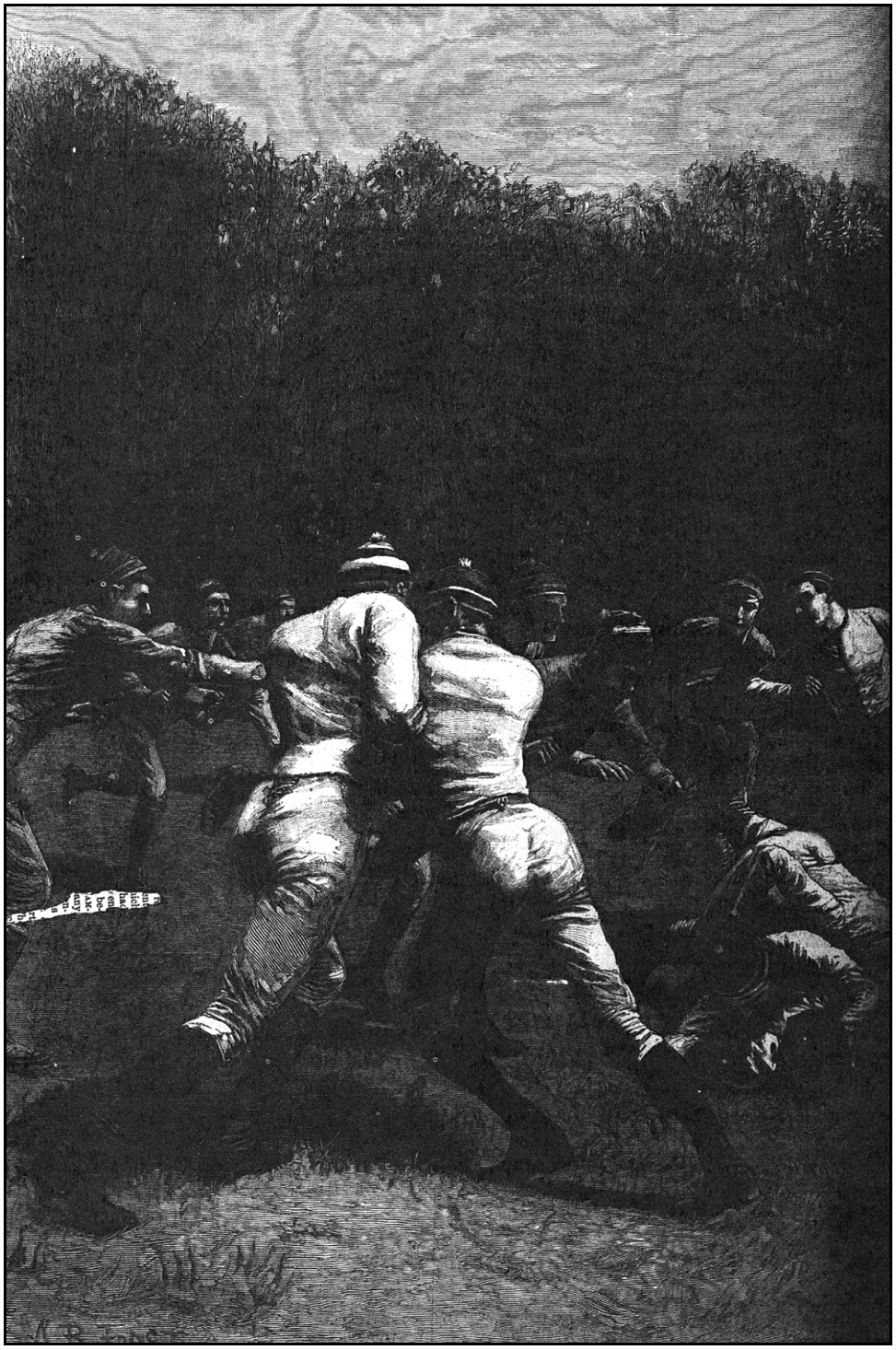

Fig. 3.7. "A Game of Football." *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 5, 1881: 744.

simple and without any intrinsic value as so much more glorious and worthy of esteem" than a reward of material value.[38] Collegiate sports would, some argued, recall and reenact that ancient, noble calling. The validation of the athletic white male by reference to the Greeks was so irreproachable that some publications joined the practice of white male display via illustrations of classical sculpture. These images were used either to enhance educational/scientific text about physical development or to illustrate classes in art schools. Viewing male bodies in the form of socially acceptable art could be justified as edifying, even if that art took the form of contemporary athletes posing in imitation of classical sculpture. After the war, college sports became firmly rooted in college life, despite the heated debates that raged in the press about whether athletics enhanced or degraded the university.[39] Numerous references were made to the

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[38] Depping, op. cit., 14.

[39] In 1880, concerned with the extent to which cultural infatuation with prowess in sports had taken over the definition of "manliness," Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's School Days*, published *The Manliness of Christ*, in which he remonstrated with those who were dissatisfied with the Young Men's Christian Association because of its perceived inadequate emphasis on manliness and its supposed fostering of weakness and timidity. A number of scholars have interpreted *Manliness* as being a revival and endorsement of the "muscular Christianity" movement. This is an erroneous interpretation. Rather, Hughes took issue with a group that wanted to form a new Christian association for men, with the requirements for entry being 1) one must be male and Christian, and 2) one must have received official recognition "for some act of courage or prowess"; a town or district athletic championship would quality a male for admission. Hughes argued that courage and athleticism have nothing to do with manliness, that manliness consists in the perfection of human character and is expressed by sacrifice, humility, patience, and complete obedience to divine will. In fact, Hughes stated that athleticism "has come to be very much over-praised and over valued . . . True manliness is as likely to be found in

virtues that were reinforced and exalted by the Greek games, and many supporters of college athletics relied on reminding the reader of the noble qualities that young men would develop if they gave their utmost selflessly to their sport. Carl Stempel notes that advocates of collegiate sports argued that the Greek games had been practiced by the ruling class and referred to the "classical" ideal of a balance between mind and body. In addition, they promoted their case for collegiate sports by warning that the ruling class and intellectuals were in danger of becoming effeminate. However, Stempel points out that modern sport is very different from the contests that constituted sport in ancient Greece. Greek fighting contests were far more brutal than matches in the late nineteenth century were; in addition, the Greek athletes were not competing merely to win a game for their school. Furthermore, the display of athletes in classical statuary was the long-lasting manifestation of "a cult of physical power and a powerful male physique."[40] This cult of the male body was an expression

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a weak as in a strong body" (21). For Hughes, the highest standard of manliness was loyalty to the truth and surrender of the will. *The Manliness of Christ* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1880).

[40]Carl William Stempel, "Towards a Historical Sociology of Sport in the United States, 1825-1875." PhD diss. (University of Oregon, 1992), 40. See also Robert J. Littman, *The Greek Experiment: Imperialism and Social Conflict 800-400 B. C.* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974). Littman says that the Greeks were one of the most competitive peoples in history. Everything was a contest to them, and one's sense of worth was determined by the opinion of others. Littman argues that the "competitiveness of the Greeks was rooted in their narcissism, which led them into a continuing struggle for personal glory and fame." 14

of a culture that was characterized, at least in its male world, by competition: "everything was a contest."[41]

As for the much-vaunted ideal of the amateur athlete, that noble entity was a fabrication of the nineteenth-century elitist imagination. In *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, David C. Young argues that historians of Greek sport are in error if they believe that those athletes were not professional athletes. Greek athletes contended for prizes and money, and in fact, Young points out, the Greeks had no word for amateur. Young contends that nineteenth and twentieth historians of Greek sport either rewrote the facts or else they did not understand the culture in this respect.[42] Nevertheless, the Greek maxim of *mens sana in corpore sano* (a sound mind in a sound body) was enormously appealing to those who wanted to preserve the traditional virtues of learning and morality while including the physically competitive element among the mental, the spiritual, and the social elements of existence. In the 1880s, a male college graduate was expected to make his livelihood in a realm other than the seamy world of professional sports, but if he were to be a true man, he needed to be morally upright, hardworking, mindful of his class, energetic, athletic, strong, and symmetrical. If he emulated the Greek athlete, he could sweep the last four.

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[41]Littman, 13.
[42]David C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*. (Chicago: Ares, 1985).

The handmaiden of this new notion of manhood was the quantifier and standard setter of the human body, anthropometry, which had been used heretofore to construct taxonomies of ethnicity, race, and sex and to create standards of aesthetic value and evolutionary progress. Now, anthropometry was set a new task: the establishment of standards for masculinity and the quantification of the biggest and most beautifully developed men. The two goals were size and symmetry, and no one was better positioned to use and promote the benefits of anthropometry than Dudley Allen Sargent, medical doctor and director of Harvard's Hemenway Gymnasium. Sargent's career exemplifies the conjunction of three cultural forces: medical science, physical fitness, and the cultural obsession with quantification, comparison, admiration, and control that had begun to pervade sports. Sargent, born in Maine in 1849, became the director of physical education at Bowdoin while he was a student there. In 1873, he accepted a position teaching gymnastics at Yale while he attended medical school, graduating in 1878. A few months after graduating, he moved to New York, where he met William Blaikie, a lawyer, fitness enthusiast, and author of *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So* (1879), and opened the Hygienic Institute and School of Physical Culture. Less than a year later, Harvard hired him as the

director of the gymnasium and as an assistant professor of physical training. In 1881, Sargent opened a gymnasium at Radcliffe as well.[43]

While he was at Bowdoin, Sargent had begun his study of physical development and the effects of different forms of exercise by taking the measurements of students. When he took the position at Harvard, he continued his study of young men's bodies.[44] In the late 1880s, after years of taking anthropometric statistics of college students, Sargent wrote several articles for *Scribner's Magazine*. These articles sought to link specific kinds of physical development (and non-development) with certain types of exercise. In true Victorian fashion, Sargent also linked the physical aspect of his subjects with their moral and spiritual development as well as with their mental and intellectual health. In an attempt to convince the public that holding competitions and offering prizes merely focused all the resources and attention on a very few athletes and excluded the youth who truly needed exercise, Sargent wrote in 1887 for *Scribner's*,

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[43]Dudley Allen Sargent, *An Autobiography*. Ed. Ledyard W. Sargent, intro. By R. Tait McKenzie, M.D. (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1927).

[44]One of the young men whom Sargent examined was Theodore Roosevelt. In 1880, shortly before Roosevelt graduated, Sargent informed him that his heart had been strained by asthma and overly strenuous exercise and that Roosevelt must take care to be as inactive as possible. Roosevelt immediately chose to do the opposite and told Sargent that if he had to be inactive, he didn't care how short his life was. Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 129.

> Do not the harmonious development of the physique, and the building up and broadening out of the highest types of manhood and womanhood, offer an inducement to work for? … Is this love of symmetry in form a myth, or has it a deep moral significance? I hold that it has not only a moral significance, but also a physiological significance, and that the size, shape, and structure of the body have a direct dynamic relation to all the vital organs, and appreciably influence the functions of the brain and nervous system.[45]

Sargent was dedicated to anthropometry, measuring and comparing every body part that could be altered by exercise. He developed graphs that showed the average measurements of his research pool (one thousand men from sixteen to thirty), so that men could discern where they fit into the norm.[46] He measured body parts and administered strength tests to the back, legs, chest, upper arm, and forearm of college men in order to show "not only the relative standing of one individual as compared with another, but also the relation of every part of

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[45]D. A. Sargent, M.D., "The Physical Proportions of the Typical Man," *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 1, July 1887, 6. Sargent's colleague, William Blaikie, expressed the same sentiments in "American Bodies," published in 1883, where he lamented the exclusion from exercise of those who needed it most, and not only those on college campuses, but the general populace. Blaikie concluded his article with the declaration that if England could impress on everyone the value of exercise, she could "increase the working capacity of our countrymen." William Blaikie, "American Bodies," in *Harper's Weekly* 27, no. 1406, Dec. 1, 1883, 770.

[46] Sargent's charts showing averages for size and strength of various body parts. Each individual's measurements and strength were plotted onto the chart and showed where that person's measurements were in relation to the average. As Sargent remarks in his autobiography, "From 10 to 12, from 2 to 4, and from 7 to 8, I examined, consulted and measured Harvard." *Autobiography*, 173.

the individual to every other part…. The extent of the variation is the desirable thing to know."[47]

The fascination with statistics and measurement thus spread to the culture via popular periodicals rather than being limited to the scientific community. In tune with the public's desire for images, editors helped to make the numbers and graphs meaningful by to incorporating illustrations of young men in the briefest of briefs, frozen in various athletic poses to let the reader see the results of collegiate sports. Science, athletics, and the media thus formed a synergistic relationship that provided a way for the body, especially the elite white male body, to become acceptable as a visual commodity. The popular media may have been the most critical element of all, for without it, science and athletics could not have had the cultural impact that they did: most people learned about sports and the bodies of athletic white men not by attending sports events or college, but by looking at pictures and reading newspapers and magazines.

Genteel periodicals

Although illustrations of nearly naked white men appeared first in the sports press, with Sargent's articles, *Scribner's Magazine*, one of the "genteel"

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[47]Sargent, "Typical Man," 11. Eugene L. Richards rebutted Sargent's arguments in "College Athletics and Physical Development," *The Popular Science Monthly* 32 (April 1888): 731-32. Richards defended competitive athletics, arguing that they were a way to get young men to exercise and that they motivated people to a love of symmetry, "which has such 'a deep moral significance.'" He had anthropometric charts of his own to display, as well, lest any reader be

monthlies, published images of unclothed athletes. The difference was that the men were college athletes and the display of their bodies was put forth as strictly didactic, a visual clarification of whatever points the writer was trying to make.[48] Sargent discusses at length the physiques of the men and the sports that led to various kinds of physical development. What was new for *Scribner's*, however, was the type of illustration its editors incorporated into the articles—portraits of contemporary Harvard men. The reader is enlightened not only by Sargent's text, but also by the illustrations of college men in trunks, displaying themselves in poses characteristic of specific sports. This context and purpose for displaying the white male body tempered the bluntness of the images. The male body became an object for visual consumption not only in the *Gazette* (which could be dismissed by elite readers as a sensationalistic tabloid, which it was), but also in more genteel, family-oriented publications. Because of its situation as a research subject for scientists and an actor in college athletics (not to mention magazine sales), the unclothed white male could display its strength and power to a more diverse audience. Thus its pervasiveness as an argument for its own superiority over other males and over females became more tightly woven into the cultural

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curious about the lengths, breadths, girths, and performance tests of the average and of the athletic students at Amherst.

[48]Explaining that sports develop specific muscles and create a certain type of body, Sargent says, "The same training that produced those matchless specimens of human development embodied in the statues of the Gladiator, the Athlete, Hercules, Apollo, and Mercury of Old, would produce

fabric. For example, in "The Physical Proportions of the Typical Man," Sargent condemned the tendency to pursue sport as an end in itself and to overvalue excellence in sport, which eliminates all but a small minority from participation (figs 3.8 and 3.9). The article details his quest to impose scientific method on the systems of measurements in order to achieve uniformity of instruments and practices, so that studies can be compared, and to understand the influences on the "growth and development of the body under the various conditions of life."[49] The article contains ten figures of young men and an illustration of a forearm. With the exception of the first figure, the men are represented wearing tight briefs. The "briefs" are not truly representations of clothing, however; the impression of pelvic covering is created by horizontal lines drawn across the figure from the hips to the tops of the thighs, and in several of the illustrations, the figure is more nude than not. The figures of the young men are matched to the graphs so that the reader can see exactly how the graphic abstractions translate in terms of the male body. For example, one graph corresponds to one of the young men shown, while another graph refers to several of the illustrations. Sargent tells us that the purpose of the

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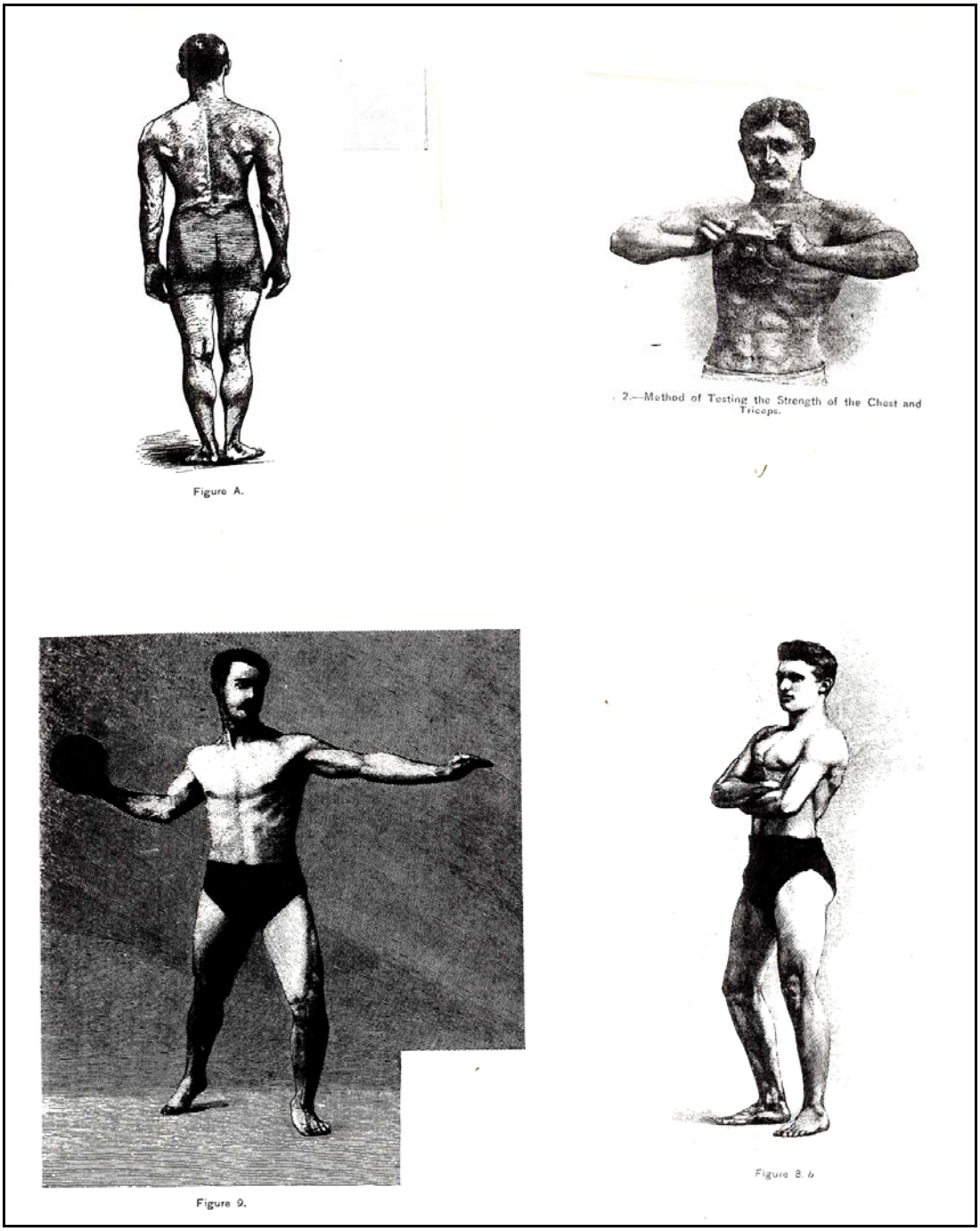
the same results under similar circumstances at the present time." In "Physical Characteristics of the Athlete," *Scribner's Magazine,* V. 2, Nov. 1887, 542.

[49]Sargent, "The Physical Proportions of the Typical Man," *Scribner's Magazine*, v. 2, no 1, July 1887, 6, 7.



Figs. 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11. Top left and right, from "The Physical Proportions of the Typical Man," *Scribner's Magazine*, June 1887: 6, 7. Bottom left and right, from "The Physical Characteristics of the Athlete," *Scribner's Magazine*, November 1887: 551.

charts is to motivate young men and women to exercise by showing them the relation of their bodies "in size, strength, symmetry, and development to the normal standard."[50]

Four months later, in "The Physical Characteristics of the Athlete," also in *Scribner's*, Sargent designed a chart that reflects the measurements of 2,300 Harvard students. The chart shows, he says, the influence of physical activity upon the "non-athletic class" and the "athletic class." The article as a whole, however, reflects observations and measurements of the bodies of "representative members of the different athletic organizations in the universities of Yale and Harvard, a few of whom distinguished themselves, within the last two years, by breaking all previous college records for certain events"[51] (figs. 3.10, 3.11). Sargent discusses the different kinds of physical development seen in the two classes as well as the improvement of strength and stamina from regular workouts in the gymnasium. Much of the twenty-one-page article consists of other graphs and of photographs showing typical poses for specific sports. Two pages are text only, while the pages with the graphs devote approximately half a page to the graph and half to text; the pages with the images of men contain much less text than image. One image, of two muscular men standing in a

[50]Ibid., 11.
[51]D. A. Sargent, M.D. "The Physical Characteristics of the Athlete," *Scribner's Magazine*, v. 2, no. 5, Nov. 1887, 541-561; 543.

wrestling hold, is a full-page (fig. 3.12). The sports represented by theses images are track and field, rowing, football, wrestling, baseball, and lacrosse. The first images are of runners and walkers, posing as if photographed in mid-stride. Sargent includes for each figure the year of graduation, the man's age, height, weight, and athletic statistics and records held. Two of the men, Sargent tells us, are the second and third-strongest men at Harvard. The text is characterized by painstaking detail about the men's bodies, their muscle formations, the length of limb and depth of chest, respiratory capacity, girth of the waist, chest, hips, thighs, and arms, breadth of shoulders, etc.

Sargent's purpose in presenting the reader with detailed descriptions, charts and images of athletic young men dressed in the briefest possible clothing may have been the desire to provide proof of the benefits of gymnastic exercise. The significance for the culture, however, is not what he thought his intent was, but rather the effect on viewers of such representations of gender. The author, a doctor, professor of physical training, and director of the gymnasium Harvard, and the reputation of the magazine itself legitimated these illustrations. These articles indicate that *Scribner's* editors believed that its readers knew how to read line-graphs and were interested in statistics and descriptions relating to men's

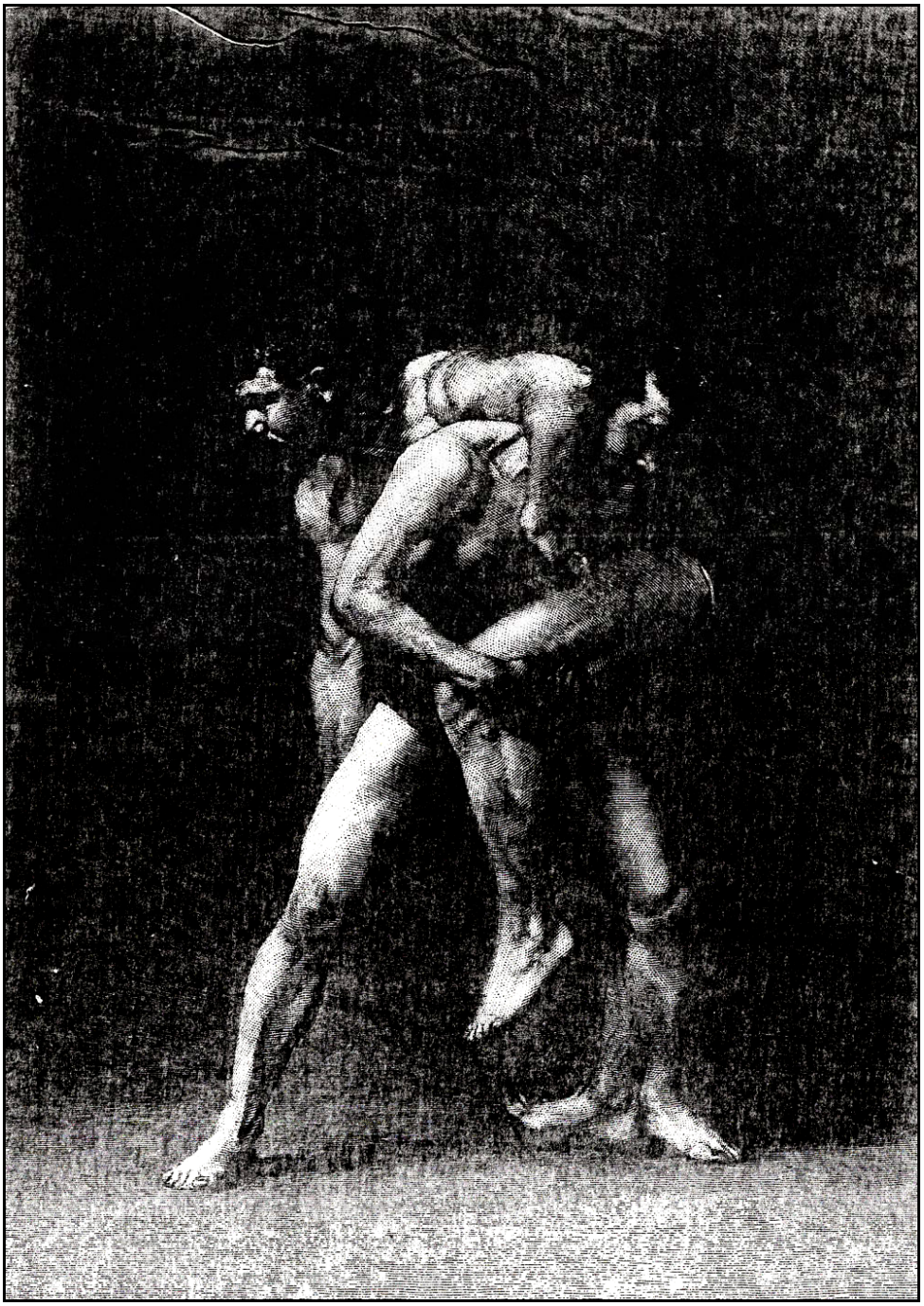


Fig. 3.12. From "The Physical Characteristics of the Typical Athlete." The man facing left, a gymnast and track-and-field athlete, "is the third strongest man at Harvard." The man facing right is "the type of a middle-weight wrestler." *Scribner's Magazine*, November 1887: 553.

bodies. The editors also assumed that *Scribner's* readers would see images of nearly naked, athletic men as acceptable fare for a family magazine and that the upper-class, Ivy League, white male could be and needed to be, muscular, athletic, and visually pleasing in order to fit the emerging norms for masculinity. Features about the fine arts reinforced these norms; the illustrations of Cellini's "Perseus" and Michelangelo's "David" exemplify the new model for manliness for the genteel reader. Furthermore, the nearly naked, muscular male in the illustrated press at this time was not viewed, at least not overtly, as a commodity to arouse and gratify sexual desire, as were illustrations of nearly naked women in the *Gazette*'s displays of burlesque performers, beach-goers, betrayed lovers, and madwomen. *Scribner's* illustrations of college athletes, the *National Police Gazette*'s massive boxers and wrestlers, represented as wearing tight briefs and flexing one's muscles, were not intended to be received as provocative or erotic acts. To appear nearly naked in the pages of *Scribner's* did not seem inappropriate to the athletes, nor, apparently, did it to the magazine's editors or readers. An understanding seemed to exist between publishers and readers that regardless of the sexual allure of an illustration of a man's body, and regardless of the brevity of his costume, neither producer nor consumer of the image would acknowledge the inherent eroticism of the representation. These images were proffered as a way to illustrate athletic and scientific "realities."

Images in the illustrated press delineated social hierarchy by class as well as by gender and race. Periodical illustrations reinforced class distinctions by means of the publication in which they appeared, by sport, and by the auspices under which the images were constructed. Class was telegraphed by the pretext for the display of the male body and how it was represented. The male body as represented in *Scribner's* typically portrayed an Ivy League college athlete engaged in a wrestling hold or standing alone, demonstrating either an athletic stance or the muscular development derived from a particular college sport. *The National Police Gazette*, on the other hand, usually positioned its images of bodies in one of two ways: either engaged in a usually violent athletic contest or in a gratuitous display of the muscular male form. The *Gazette* continued to represent strong white males as athletes, and as boxers and wrestlers in particular. The differences between the seventies and the eighties were seen in how frequently the white male body appeared, the size of the images, and the poses, i.e., the rationale for having particular displays of white males. The iconography began to change from an image of a body being employed in the service of illustrating sports to being employed in the service of creating for the middle and upper classes a new model for dominant white manhood. Readers of the *Gazette* were familiar already with the message: certain kinds of physical appearance functioned as the currency of power, and implicit in that appearance

was the message of class and heterosexual orientation, youth and physical power. Like *Scribner's Magazine, Harper's Weekly* published images of art and covered the annual art shows at various schools. *Harper's* ran features about sports, but these events were a far cry from those seen in the *Gazette.* Instead, readers took in such images as the athletes at the annual championship games of the Manhattan Athletic Club (fig. 3.13) or the Yale varsity crew at practice. *Harper's* even used strength performances as the theme in political cartoons, as is seen on its cover for June 16, 1888, which portrays Grover Cleveland as a strong man at "The Great Moral Circus"(fig. 3.14). When such publications as *Scribner's* joined the enthusiasm for male bodies, they met the tolerances and class expectations of their readers by displaying Ivy League athletes. These factors of historically defined whiteness, maleness, and middle- and upper-class status constitute, in the United States, three major factors in the representation and public acknowledgment of belonging to the highest level of political power. Another factor is equally important, however, and that is the performance of the signs of heterosexuality, which also is historically defined and culturally enacted.

The representation of sexual orientation was the most fundamental element in the construction of gender in the United States at this time. The appearance and enactment of sexual orientation was the sign of one's sex in a culture that both recognized variations in prescriptive gender and also

maintained dichotomous definitions of what it mean to be female or male. In this type of understanding, the "or" in the previous sentence is important. Certain behaviors, clothing, postures, ways of moving, physical and mental abilities, occupations, and body types among anatomical males are considered to be more "male" than others, more masculine, more "man." "Manliness" and a "homosexual" anatomical male were mutually exclusive according to hegemonic definitions. Those who have controlled discourse assume that (anatomical) men are interested in having women for sexual partners: it is part of what it means to be masculine. Because part of what it meant to be masculine was to be heterosexual, maintenance of a conventionally masculine appearance itself identified a man as heterosexual. A man simply could not be both homosexual and masculine. Thus, maintenance of an appearance that is conventionally masculine has been historically the best protection for gay men in a homophobic culture. As boxing came to epitomize the elemental struggle that men felt not only with the other man in the ring, but with all other men, and with forces intangible and monumental, the white male physique assumed a place in the cultural imagination which it had not held explicitly before. It was read as a

Fig. 3.13. "English and American contestants at the annual championship games, Manhattan Athletic Club grounds." *Harper's Weekly*, September 24, 1887: 693.

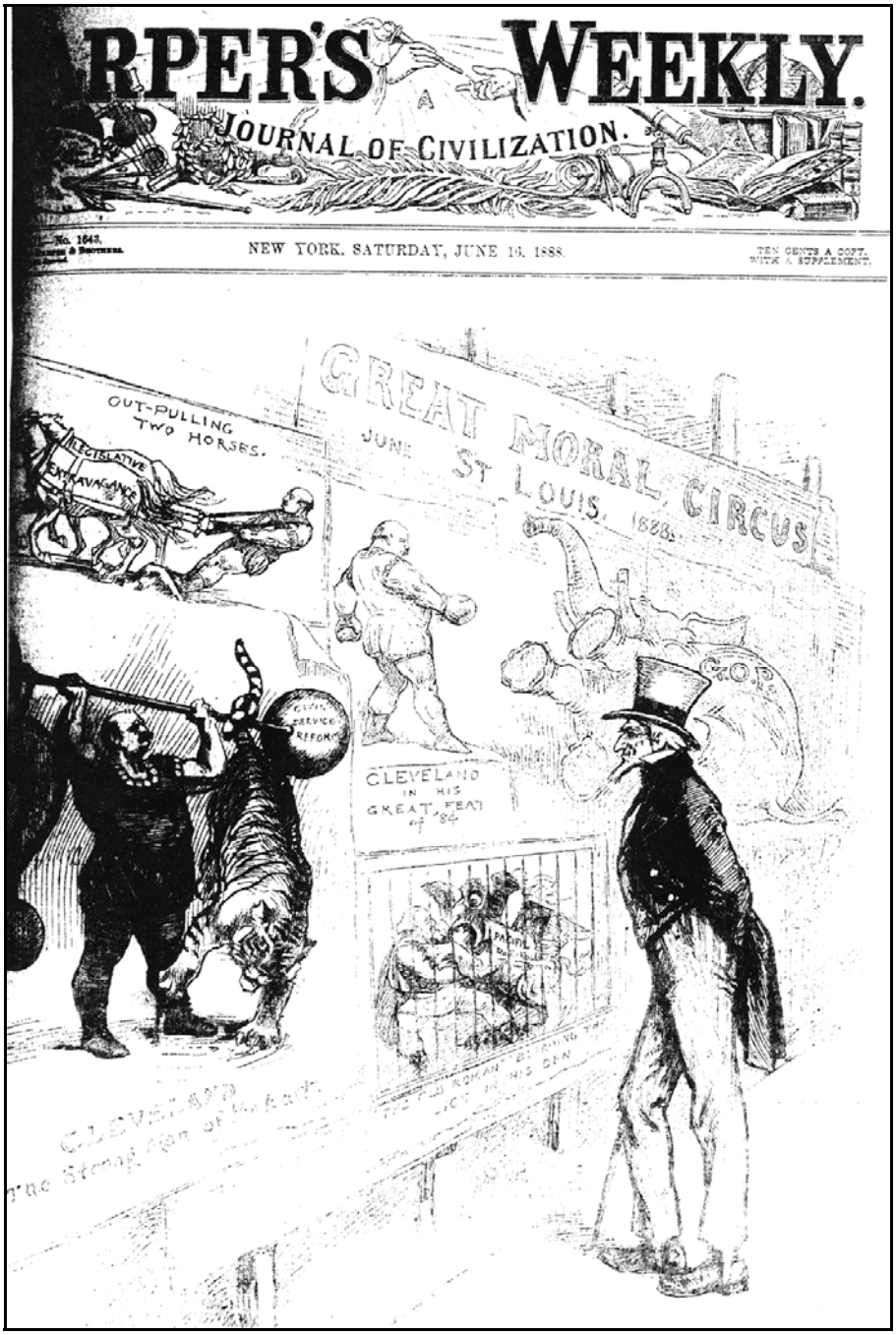


Fig. 3.14. "A Strong Combination." The text beneath President Cleveland says, "Cleveland. The Strong Man of the East." The barbell next to the tiger says, "Civil Service Reform." *Harper's Weekly*, June 15, 1888: cover.

statement about sexual orientation. White heterosexual virility, in this increasingly voyeuristic and recreation-oriented society, found its proof in the body: what it could do and how it looked.

Although in the 1880s, the mainstream press didn't analyze such all-male enclaves (or as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls them, "homosocial" worlds) as men's clubs, athletic teams, bars, saloons, etc.,[52] awareness of homosexuality was amply evident in public rhetoric. As John Tosh points out, all-male associations for hegemonic males were most definitely for camaraderie only; "all-male associations sustained gender privilege, while at the same time imposing a discipline on individuals in the interests of patriarchal stability."[53] Mainstream all-male associations were overtly restricted to non-sexual association--the reality was that the stream was full of sexual crosscurrents. The culture had terms for men who did not fit the heterosexual concept of "manliness:" Miss Nancy, sissies, Sunday School prigs were a few such labels. Fear and condemnation of men who were attracted to other men is evident most blatantly in the energy that was put into convincing oneself and those around one that one was not an "invert," the term used for those whose personal appearance did not conform to hegemonic gender representation or who evidenced non-mainstream sexual

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[52] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)

orientations. Ironically, one has only to look at the *Gazette* to find a number of instances of masculine expression that differed from the strong, white, heterosexual variants. Occasionally, the *Gazette* published illustrations of alternative masculinities: a man being spanked in public by a woman and several illustrations of men being flogged by other men. *Harper's Weekly* ran a picture of a man admiring his lavish outfit in the mirror, his male attendant hovering next to him. Even Oscar Wilde received a positive review from the *Gazette* when he came to lecture in New York in 1882.[54]

Elitist paranoia about masculinity, race, sexual ability, and appearance was not limited to the personal, however. Compulsory masculinity was coming into its own in terms of domestic and foreign policy, as well. Although boundary setting, territoriality, nationalism, and control over the environment and one's destiny had always been a part of the national ethos and identity, in the 1880s this imaginary masculinist self in relation to the world widened its scope and began its transformation into a counterpart of European nations and their "possessions." The template of white, male, heterosexual physical power was about to be transferred onto national policy and international relations *in toto*.

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[53]John Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-century Britain." *History Workshop: a journal of socialist and feminist historians*, Issue 38, Autumn 1994, 187.
[54] *The National Police Gazette*, V. 39, No. 227, Jan. 28, 1882, 4.

Foreign relations within the United States

By 1852, the Gold Rush of 1849 had brought 25,000 Chinese workers to California. Over the next quarter-century, thousands more arrived to join them in mining or to work on the railroads; the transcontinental railroad, which was begun at Omaha and Sacramento in the early 1860s was completed in Utah in 1869. More miles of railroad track were laid in the 1880s in the United States than during any other decade. Chinese immigration continued and eventually became the whipping-post for much of the anger and frustration of non-Chinese laborers about the many economic problems of the 1870s. Particularly in the West, Euroamerican laborers terrorized Chinese settlers; in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, which forbade Chinese immigration for ten years.[55] Immigrants from China were not the only targets. As the Chinese labored on the railroad moving east, the Native American peoples stood in the way of railway expansion and settlement westward settlement. In *National Problems 1885-1897*, a volume in the *American Nation: A History* series (1907), Davis Rich Dewey offers a contemporary insight into the prevailing attitudes of the history profession by way of his overview of what he saw as the significant issues of his time. (Albert Bushnell Hart, Harvard history professor and editor of this series, was one of the

[55] Congress renewed the Act in 1892 and made it permanent in 1902. Hoping to improve relations with China during World War II, Congress repealed the Act in 1943, when the United States allowed one hundred and five Chinese persons per year to assume residence.

late nineteenth-century revisionists of historiography; as such he helped to further the agenda of expansionism.) Discussing U.S. growth and development during those years, Dewey tells us that

> with the filling up of the country to the west, another removal of the Indian was impracticable; the immediate problem, therefore, was the adjustment of Indian barbarism to Anglo-Saxon civilization. The alert American . . . would not tolerate the uneconomic use of millions of acres given over to the Indian occupancy.[56]

This widespread assessment led to the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, an Act which extended U.S. colonialism even further into the existence of Native Americans. Under the guise of paternalism and "taking care of" these Americans, the (white male elite) government exerted control over their entire lives, infantilizing and feminizing them as persons and as nations by defining them according to its dominant legal definitions of "child" and "woman" of that time. These definitions and the stipulations of the Dawes Act situated Native Americans as incapable of self-government, of economic self-determination, and of rearing their children. Congress gave them allowances of land, denied them the power of decision-making about selling the land, and bought parts of

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[56] Davis Rich Dewey, *National Problems 1885-1897*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart, *The American Nation: A History*, Vol. 24 (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1907), 7. Hart's introduction asserts that the major conflict during those years was between the "powers of vested interests" and the pressure from farmers and trade and manufacturing unions. The major issue, he says, "comes from the conviction of large classes of the community" that the economic system gave them "less than their fair share of the nation's annual product." Dewey, xii.

reservations without paying for them, claiming that it would keep the funds safe for the future. The Act severed tribal relations, replacing tribal ownership on the reservation with individual ownership. Each head of family was granted a quarter section of land (160 acres), with smaller allotments to others; conveyance of the land was prohibited for twenty-five years. The Native Americans in severalty were given the promise of citizenship. The U.S. government wanted to buy parts of the reservations to add land to the public domain, but instead of paying the Indians for the land, the U.S. "invested the funds for the benefit of the tribes." In addition, Congress allocated funds for the mainstream education of the Native American. By 1888, many of the "teachable" children were in school, and in 1891, compulsory education was enacted. Some children went to day schools, but most of them were taken from their families and shipped to reservation boarding schools and, in some cases, to schools outside the reservation.[57]

Not surprisingly, these measures of coercion, control, and assimilation failed to satisfy white settlers. Perhaps the assimilation was not "ready and pliant" enough. The space that the Native American body occupied shrank as the white body expanded, unwilling to restrain or compromise its growth. Settlers and cattle ranchers disregarded treaty rights and sometimes attacked

[57]Ibid., 8.

tribes. Government officials stole rations, and treaty violations continued. Although President Cleveland refused to open the Indian Territory of the Oklahoma Territory to white settlers, President Harrison wasted no time. He purchased the land and on April 22, 1889, opened it to white settlement. The Sioux reservation in Dakota was opened to homesteaders in 1890 as well, which led to the battle of Wounded Knee on Dec. 29, 1890,[58] a carnage resulting when Gen. Nelson Miles and his troops used machine guns on the Sioux families.[59]

Similar frustrations to Anglo-Saxon male dominance were being enacted in the East. The immigrations of 1880-1900, both within the U.S. from rural areas to cities and from other nations, added a sudden and tremendous burden to cities. Immigration from eastern and southern Europe aggravated the urban slum problem; these peoples were the antithesis of those whom Fiske and Strong

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[58] Dewey, 8-9.

[59] At this point, Miles had been conquering Native American nations for the U.S. Army for approximately twenty years. Although Crazy Horse, Gall, and Sitting Bull had defeated Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn valley, six months later Miles wore down Crazy Horse and his people, which led to their eventual surrender. Miles also had captured Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce and Geronimo of the Apache nation. In 1895, he was made commander in chief of the Army. After Dewey's success at Manila in May 1898 during the Spanish-American War, President McKinley and Secretary of the Navy John D. Long adopted the war recommendations of Theodore Roosevelt, Long's assistant, despite the objections of Miles. After the war, Roosevelt had nothing but harsh criticism for the Dept. of the Army for its bungling and disorganization during the departure of troops from Tampa, its failure to provide adequate food for horses and troops, and its failure to bring home wounded troops in a timely manner. During the Philippine-American War, when Roosevelt was president, Miles went to the Philippines and returned with a report that the U.S. military was mistreating the Filipino insurgents. As a result, he was retired from service. See Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography*, Ch. VII, "The War of America the Unready," 209-261. Roosevelt appended to this chapter two sections of letters that laud his

envisioned ruling the world. The shiploads of Slavs, Poles, Italians, Russians, Austrian-Hungarians, Germans, Irish, and Greeks stepped off the boat in eastern seaboard cities and stayed there, which led to immediate overcrowding, filth, disease, labor disputes, and starvation. Jacob Riis reported in *The Battle with the Slum* that in 1880, on the eve of the human influx, the Tenth Ward held 432 residents to the acre. In 1890, there were 522: in 1895, 643. By 1900, one of the blocks in the Tenth had nearly 3,000 persons or 1,724 per acre; one in the Eleventh Ward contained 1,894 persons.[60] Not everyone settled in the East, however. Many Germans, Poles, and Scandinavians migrated to Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, where they wanted to homestead. Some of them were the settlers whose demand for land had caused the Army to slaughter the Sioux at Wounded Knee. Euroamericans who were angry about social change and about the economic vulnerability generated by industrialism and were afraid of losing cultural power to new immigrants vented their feelings in violent reactions to incidents attributed to recent arrivals from eastern and southern Europe. The labor protest in 1886 at Haymarket Square, where a bomb was thrown at police who ordered the crowd to disperse, resulted in the arrest of

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performance in Cuba. Appendices A and B, 262-278. See also Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 611, 627.

[60] Jacob Riis, *The Battle With the Slum*. (New York: 1902), 82, 84. The Tenth Ward block was circumscribed by Canal, Hester, Eldridge, and Forsyth streets, the Eleventh Ward block by Stanton, Houston, Attorney, and Ridge streets.

eight men labeled "anarchists," a term that connoted eastern European birth, situation in labor interests, a refusal to abide by the law, and the intent to overthrow the government. The court found no evidence of guilt; nonetheless, four of the defendants were executed. In 1891, U. S. relations with Italy became estranged and mistrustful when a mob in New Orleans killed several Italian men who had been tried but found not guilty of a revenge-killing of the chief of police. The popular reaction was consensus that the Mafia had bribed the court, and a group of men took the accused from jail and lynched them. Italy demanded federal judicial proceedings against the lynchers, which were refused on the basis of a lack of jurisdiction; it was a municipal and state law matter, according to Secretary of State James G. Blaine. The foreign ministers to both nations were withdrawn temporarily, returning in 1892. In this case, the U.S. did not behave towards Italy as it would have expected Italy to behave had the situation been reversed.[61]

Foreign relations abroad

Between 1880 and 1900, the role of the United States in world affairs underwent a transformation in its relationship with other powerful nations. The occupation of the Americas by Europeans had been itself westward expansion, and European immigrants had, since they first settled in North America, been

[61] Dewey, 206-07.

involved in expansion westward and in international trade. Jefferson, for example, had been a radical expansionist. Moreover, some politicians had made a quest of pushing the dominion of the U.S. over the Western Hemisphere since before the Civil War. In the 1880s, however, the quest for economic boundlessness and control of other lands accelerated. One of the expansionists was Secretary of State William Henry Seward (held office 1861-1869), who in 1867 had seen to the annexation of the Midway Islands and the purchase of Alaska. Under President Garfield, Secretary of State James G. Blaine made plans for commerce with Latin America and the Caribbean Islands, plans that were picked up by Frederick Frelinghuysen, his successor under the Arthur administration. Blaine returned to office between 1889 and 1892 with the Benjamin Harrison administration and was involved with the machinations that led to the white-minority overthrow of the Hawaiian government in 1893. A few years later, in July 1898, McKinley's signature on a joint Congressional resolution as the U.S. won the Spanish-American War effected the official annexation of Hawaii. The ideologies of white male supremacy—theories of evolution as "proof" of Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic superiority, medical arguments about male mental and physical superiority, and the tremendous energy being exerted by the upper classes to show white male bodies as being the most powerful—were

finding stronger expression in national identity and in a more contentious and more powerful role in foreign relations.

Competition among European powers

After the final defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815 and the consequent territorial maneuvering and resultant nationalistic uprisings culminating just before mid-century, the emergence of Prussia and Italy between 1861 and 1866 signaled a new era in military power. Prussia defeated France in 1870-71, and Germany was unified into a hugely powerful nation, with Berlin displacing Paris as the center of Europe. However, England, France, Italy, Germany, and Russia were in the process of creating a network of colonies, protectorates, and strategic bases, all with varying levels of resistance from the native populations. The Congress of Berlin in 1878, initiated by Bismarck in an attempt to prevent England and Russia from going to war over the Middle East and the Balkans, resulted in the division of the Ottoman Empire among Russia, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, and France. This partition quieted those nations temporarily about German unification and its new dominance. Germany itself annexed parts of Africa in the 1880s and then distributed various territories to maintain a balance of power among other European nations. The fever of social Darwinism had infected Europe as well as the United States; as Stephen Kern argues in *The Culture of Time and Space*, it is "impossible to exaggerate the pervasive influence

of evolutionary theory in this period and the appeal of the biological metaphor."[62] He concludes that the cultural fixation on size and the importance placed on biological growth as a metaphor for national health cannot be overestimated. He states that imperialistic rhetoric latched on to the prevailing belief that the cell, the organism, and the nation-state have an instinct for expansion and used terms of embryology and expansion to explain and to justify the creation of colonies. The struggle for survival entailed constant expansion or inevitable death; stasis was not possible. The belief in survival being contingent on expansion, a metaphor that affirmed the manifest destiny in the United States, found a place in physical training discourse there as well. In one such example, William Blaikie, author of *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So*, cited the Franco-Prussian war, urging American boys to increase their strength and the size of their bodies:

> Get a tape-measure and get the *girth* of chest; upper and fore arm; of waist, hips, thighs and calves of these little fellows;… Now send to England and get the statistics of the boys of the same age who are good at hares-and-hounds, at football, and see the difference. … Cross to Germany…. When the sweeping work the Germans made of it in their war with France is called to mind; does it not look as if there was ground for the saying that it was the superior physique of the Germans which did the business?[63]

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[62] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 224. Geoffrey Wawro states that between 1881 and 1900, Europe took control of ninety percent of the African continent. Geoffrey Wawro, *Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792-1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 125.

[63] Blaikie, *How to Get Strong* (1879), 14-15.

European expansion into Africa had gone on for centuries, and with it, armed conflicts among European nations fought on African soil. In these battles, European nations were sometimes able to form alliances with African nations, who assisted them against their competitors in exchange for protection in their own conflicts, and sometimes, survival. Until 1880, England, France, and Portugal controlled the populations of about one million square miles of African coastline. During the 1880s, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain had dominated an additional six million square miles.[64] Geoffrey Wawro presents an excellent account of this historical transition in Europe which, after Bismarck's unification of Germany, was characterized by a balance of power that was maintained and threatened by a shifting distribution of land among England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Russia.[65] To a great extent, diplomatic relations consisted of the forestallment of war among those nations by the partition of Africa.

During this period, the United States had been continuing to test the waters of a greater role *vis a vis* European nations by displays of power in

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[64] Kern, Ibid., 232-234.

[65] Geoffrey Wawro, op cit. See esp. chapter 6. For an insightful, thorough, and concise analysis of colonial warfare in Africa during this period that, see Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830-1914* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998). Vandervort addresses the perspectives of the resisters as well as of the invaders and the social impact of these wars as well as the warfare itself.

various conflicts. Beginning in 1876, Venezuela had repeatedly appealed to the U.S. to intervene against British encroachment on its boundary with British Guiana. By 1895, the situation had reached a state of such animosity that Congress passed a joint resolution for the arbitration of the problem. Shortly thereafter, Richard Olney, Secretary of State, informed Great Britain that it could not expand its territory into Venezuela because the United States controls the "law upon the subjects to which it confines it interposition." This was so, Olney asserted, because " 'its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers.'"[66] Great Britain declined arbitration, whereupon Cleveland asked Congress to appoint a special commission to determine the true line between the two countries and said that the United States would consider to be willful aggression any control over land that the commission determined to belong to Venezuela. At that point, Britain said it was willing to abide by the findings of an international tribunal, to which the U.S. agreed. In 1897, the Olney-Pauncefote treaty provided for arbitration between Britain and the United States in situations where conflict could not be resolved by negotiation. This improved relations between the two countries. It also confirmed the Anglo-Saxon supremacists in their conjoining of racial culture, the capacity for self-

[66]Dewey, 306.

government, and the exclusive civilizing powers as a "natural" continuity between England and its Anglo-Saxon brethren America.

Meanwhile, the U.S. was in constant quarrel with Great Britain about Canada's treatment of New England fishermen. In 1885, the Washington treaty of 1871 expired, under which U.S. fishermen could use Canadian ports. The law then reverted to the treaty of 1818, which placed severe restrictions on the U.S fishing rights, a consequence of the enmity of the War of 1812 era. The 1871 treaty was extended for six months, but the two nations could not find a point of agreement. Canada decided to enforce the 1818 treaty and began to seize U.S. fishing boats. Popular opinion held that the U. S. government should protect the industry with armed vessels, and the Senate passed a bill that was punitive towards Canada. However, Cleveland was not willing to act on this measure. Unauthorized by the Senate, which had opposed such measures, Secretary of State Thomas Bayard formed a commission to confer with the British, and a modified treaty was written. As might be expected, Senate Republicans, who had not approved the commission, opposed the treaty. Ultimately, even the Democrats rejected it in a close vote. In 1887 the administration settled on a policy that required U. S. fishing boats to have an annual license to enter Canadian bays and harbors. By this time, however, the industry had changed so

much that port privileges were of less importance and so most fishing companies did not bother with the license.[67]

The U. S. and England addressed an issue of mutual control in Central America as Cleveland became involved in policy concerning the thus-far-chimerical isthmian canal. In 1885, Cleveland negated the canal treaty that had been negotiated with Nicaragua in the Arthur administration and chose to rely instead on the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850 with Great Britain, which defined respective rights over a future isthmian canal. Nonetheless, in 1886 a private party made agreements with Nicaragua for grants, with Nicaragua requiring a deadline of ten years for completion of the canal. In 1889, Congress granted a charter to the company, but the company failed later that year. Under the Harrison administration, a Senate bill was introduced to guarantee $100,000,000 of the company's bonds, but debates in Congress about funding and regulating the project went on for years. The isthmian canal project was not begun in earnest until 1904, more than half a century after the initial treaty.

The United States was taking a larger role in the drama of the Pacific, as well. In 1867, the U.S. had annexed the Midway Islands and signed a treaty with Russia for the purchase of Alaska. In 1875, it signed a reciprocity treaty with Hawai'i to permit lower grades of sugar to be imported free of duty in exchange

[67] Dewey, 112-117.

for an exclusive economic and political relationship with the United States. Hawaii gave up the right to make any agreements with other powers.[68] In 1884, Hawaii agreed to give the U.S. temporary concessions for a naval station at Pearl River. The U.S. was in conflict with England on the other side of the continent as well. International relations between England and the U.S. extended far north of the Tropic of Cancer in the form of a dispute with Canada about seal fishing in the Bering Sea. Because seal fur brought so much profit, seals had been nearly exterminated at this time. In an effort to protect them and to exert its own exclusive control of the fisheries, in 1886 the U.S. seized British vessels that were sealing, claiming *ex cathedra* that the Bering Sea was included in the dominion of the U. S. Supposing this to be the case, the rule that three miles from any coastline marked the point of international waters did not apply to the U. S. and the Bering Sea. The United States ceased such seizures in 1888, resumed them in 1889, and three years later it agreed to arbitration with England. In 1893, an international tribunal decided the issue against the United States with respect to its dominion in the Bering Sea, offered regulations for future procedures, and assessed damages against the United States for the seizure of fishing boats.[69]

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[68] The United States had been a presence in Hawaii since missionaries settled there in 1820. In 1840, Hawaii had created a constitutional monarchy, and between 1842 and 1854, an American was the prime minister of Hawaii. During his tenure, the feudal land system was changed into a system of private ownership, which drew capital investment from abroad.

[69] Dewey, 209-214.

Seventy degrees and five thousand miles due south of the Bering Sea, the U.S. was maintaining an international profile in the Samoan Islands. Between 1847 and 1861, England, Germany, and the U.S. had sent "representatives" to Samoa. Since 1878, United States had had a naval station at Pago-Pago on Tutuila and had also exercised rights of extra-territoriality with Germany and Great Britain over the town of Apia on the island of Upolu. In 1880, the king of Samoa, Malietoa, agreed to accept three advisors: Germany, Great Britain, and the U. S., who proceeded to quarrel about commercial interests and political conflicts in Samoan government. The second in command to Malietoa was Tamasese, who was working on a coup to place himself in power. Germany sided with Tamasese and the U. S. and England with Malietoa. Germany and the U. S. became rivals for the islands. In 1889, at a conference at Berlin, England, Germany, and the U. S. signed a treaty to guarantee the neutrality of the islands and established a protectorate of the native government. The U. S. was taking steps to increase its involvement in world politics as it sought to protect its boundaries and keep up with the economic and political competition. In 1894, Samoans agitated for self-government again; ultimately, Great Britain, Germany, and the U. S. agreed to divide the Samoan Islands between the latter two nations,

with Great Britain taking other South Pacific islands. Germany took the islands west of longitude 171 degrees West, and the U.S. took the islands east of it.[70]

This early foray into actually "possessing" an overseas nation and using it for the benefit of the colonizer while couching the maneuver in terms of assisting the colonized people wove beautifully into the visual fabric of white male dominance and military power. In 1886, *Harper's Weekly* ran a brief story called "The Samoan Islands." The unidentified author says that the islands have come to our attention because of Germany's ambitions in the South Pacific and the steps taken by other nations to check those ambitions. The story relates a series of events beginning in 1884, by which Germany sought to take over the islands, raising its own flag and inciting a rebellion by the vice-king, Tamasese. Malietoa appealed to the American consul for protection, which was accorded, with the approval of England, by raising the American flag over Samoa's flag. The article

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[70] Mark Russell Shulman notes the difference in philosophy that rendered such a different outcome for U. S. involvement in Pohnpei (then called Ponape), an island between Guam and Samoa, due east of the Philippines. Protestant missionaries from the U. S. had gone to Pohnpei at mid-century, where their medical assistance brought many converts to Christ. In the 1880s, Germany and Spain contested for control of the island, with Spain winning. The Pohnpeiians, however, resisted the Spanish and revolted in 1887 and in 1890. In 1887, the U.S. consul in Manila called for navy protection of U. S. citizens in Pohnpei. In 1890, when the Pohnpeiians revolted again, the U.S. community fled. When they returned several days later, the Spanish restricted their movements. The Navy returned to the island; the naval commander secured an agreement that the missionaries would be removed in exchange for reparations for U. S. losses. In this situation, the Navy had been concerned to protect the rights of the civilians and the interests of the Pohnpeiians, and not to take over the island. The commander, Henry Clay Taylor, was an officer of the old navy, concerned to settle conflicts without taking possession of the territory. However, after he was posted to Newport in the '90s, he became an enthusiastic Mahanian.

includes an illustration of Malietoa (fig. 3.15). The article concludes by stating that a commissioner from the U.S. had left for Samoa to meet with representatives of England, France, and Germany in the hope "that the status of Samoa will be settled. Nature generously furnishes the Samoan with most of the requirements of his life, and he has only to take them. He works but little, if at all, sleeps much, and lives a life of ease and indolence.[71] To show the civilizing effect of Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic governance, in 1898 *Harper's* again published an illustration of Malietoa (fig. 3.16). His bearing, his pose, and his attire—full dress military uniform—all indicate the inexorable pressure of the image of the powerful white male on subordinate males. The impress is clear in his wearing of the uniform and in his representation to *Harper's* readers, who saw the "improvement" in Malietoa's level of civilization.[72] The unrelated and derogatory interpretation of the character of Samoans—"a life of ease and

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Shulman, *Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 68-71.

[71] "The Samoan Islands," *Harper's Weekly*, V. XXX, No. 1545, Jul. 31, 1886, 493-94. Such assessments were commonplace. See, for example, Edward Drinker (E. D.) Cope, *The Origin of the Fittest*. New York: 1887 and Max Buchner, "African Psychology" in *Popular Science Monthly* XXIII, July 1883, 399-404. Even fitness writers managed to insert such fatuous comments into texts about strength training. In *Strength: How to Get Strong and Keep Strong*, Richard A. Proctor states, without citing any "evidence," that "there can be no doubt that the shapely calf indicates racial advance. The lower races of savage men are calf-less. . . . It is only in the highest civilised races, and in the best specimens of these races, that we find the shapely calf shown in Greek sculptures." London: 1889.

[72] "Mata'afa in Exile," *Harper's Weekly*, V. XLII, No. 22157, Apr. 23, 1898, 393-94.

indolence'—echoed a "Pears' Soap" advertisement that the magazine had run a few months earlier (fig. 3.17). The illustration shows a full-length image of a man

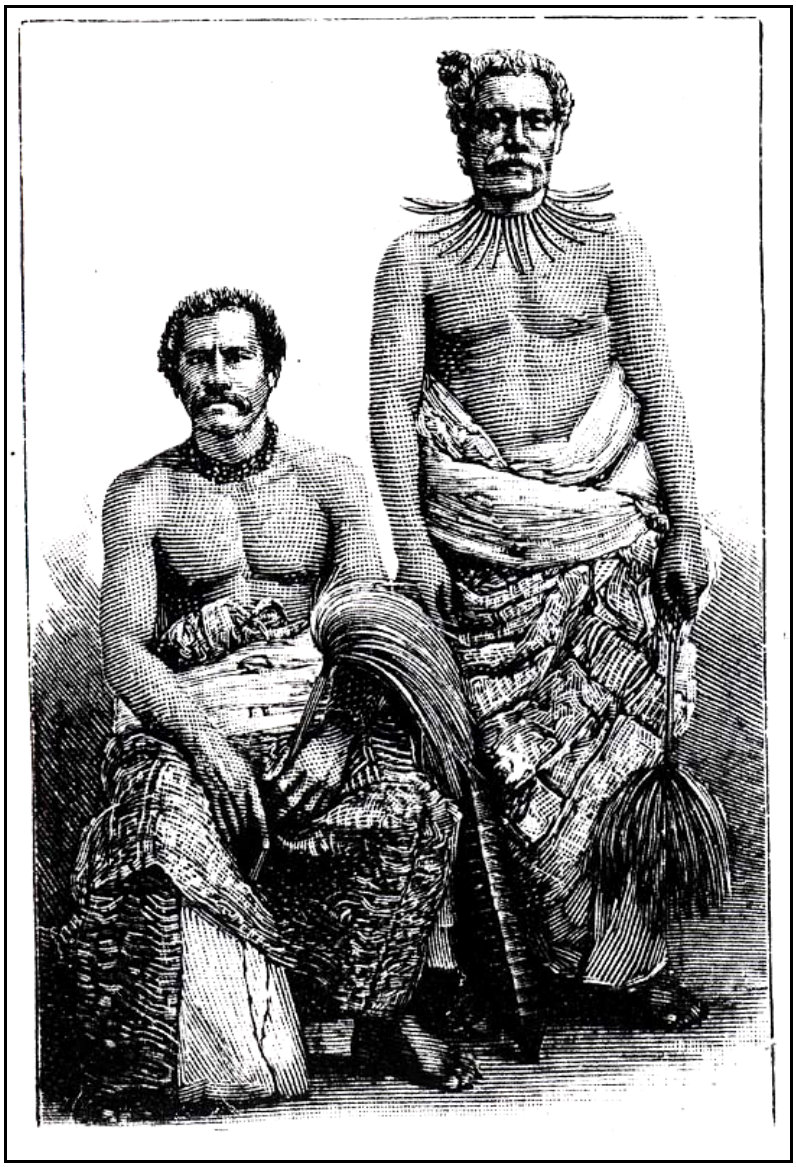

Fig. 3.15. Right, Malietoa. From "The Samoan Islands." *Harper's Weekly*, July 31, 1886: 493.

who lives on a tropical island, dressed only in a loincloth and a headband with two feathers. He holds a spear in his left hand, and in his right he holds a bar of Pears' Soap that has come from a broken crate that has washed up and broken in

Fig. 3.16. *Harper's Weekly*, April 23, 1898: 394.

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the surf. The man has a puzzled, suspicious expression as he studies the soap. The reader can infer that the islander has never seen anything like this wash up before. The text reads "The Birth of Civilization—A message from the Sea" and " 'The Consumption of Soap is a Measure of the Wealth, Civilisation, Health, and Purity of the People.' Liebig"[73] Perhaps the ad implies that now the man himself will wash up. The image, despite its juxtaposition of the "uncivilized" and the "civilized," is somewhat ambiguous in that the ship from which the soap-crate has escaped is sinking into the sea.[74]

John Fiske, Josiah Strong, Alfred Thayer Mahan

Reconstruction, immigration, and the struggle for woman suffrage had kept alive the arguments about who was capable of self-government, who should vote, and who should govern others. The answer to the question "Who is fit to govern, not only themselves, but others as well?" was, for many, always--white

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[73] "The Birth of Civilization," Pears' soap advertisement, *Harper's Weekly*, V. XXX, No. 1520, Feb. 6, 1886, 96. Perhaps the "Liebig" referred to was Baron von Liebig, a professor of chemistry at Giessen and at Munich between 1824 and 1873. His area of expertise was organic chemistry as it pertained to agriculture and physiology. The ad cites no source for this statement.

[74] Helpful discussions of this pedagogy may be found in J.A. Mangan, ed., *The imperial curriculum: Racial images and education in the British colonial experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). See esp. Mangan, "Images for confident control: Stereotypes in imperial discourse," *The imperial curriculum,* 6-22. See also Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

Fig. 3.17. Advertisement for Pears' soap. *Harper's Weekly*, February 6, 1886: 96.

men. The ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments in 1865, 1868, and 1870, respectively, outlawed slavery, ordered due process and equal protection to all United States citizens, and outlawed the denial of voting rights on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Thus did white men prohibit lower authorities to deny to black men the opportunity to vote. That Congress had extended this right to African-American men was a vindication for universal manhood suffragists and fuel for racist fires for many others. For decades before the Civil War, professional natural scientists and anthropologists, white males all, had been hard at work creating scientific and "objective" racially based categories for evolution and intelligence.

Racial antagonisms, women's struggles for equal rights and equal access to resources, the reality that the Anglo-Saxon population grew proportionately smaller with each year, class and labor struggles--all threatened to change, had already changed--the human landscape that constituted the United States. The responses from the ruling class varied in tone and solution, but all had the same purpose: to ensure that the underlying *status quo* was not disturbed. The 1880s and '90s were a period of massive immigration of peoples whose histories, religions, and folkways were so different as to be incomprehensible to descendants of western European Protestants. Between 1877 and 1890 more than 6.3 million immigrants came to the United States, and by 1890, 9 million persons

out of a population of 60 million--15 percent--were born elsewhere; four of five persons in New York City were foreign born or of foreign parentage.[75] The real issue, however, was not immigration *per se*; every non-Native American on the continent was either an immigrant or was descended from immigrants. The problem for the established immigrants was provenance and presentation of the new ones: the culture, the look, the languages and habits of the immigrants were from cultures that were unfamiliar to most established residents. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most newcomers were from northern and western Europe. After 1875, that changed, with most immigrants now coming from southern and Eastern Europe. Between 1880 and 1910, about 8.4 million people immigrated from Italy, Greece, the Balkans, Poland, and Russia.[76] These cultures presented the Victorian, Protestant-ethic, capitalistic, efficiency-minded, self-righteous, Anglo-Saxon United States with the antithesis of its imaginary, idealized self. The middle and upper classes, who had access to the press, attributed the social problems of the time, which also were unfamiliar to an extent, to the poverty, aesthetics, folkways, and ways of life in general of the immigrants. They interpreted cultural difference as an implacable miasma that would undo all the economic, moral, and political progress, as the descendants

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[75]Robert A. Divine et al., ed., *American Past and Present*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Glenview, Illinois and London: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1987, 1984), 561.
[76]*Ibid*., 562.

of previous white immigrants saw it, which they had made. The immigrants brought customs, foods, clothing, and beliefs that seemed to threaten its way of life. They were poor, uneducated, and most of them were unskilled; they were labeled and dismissed as clannish, backward, and recalcitrant. They refused to abandon their religions, and many refused to learn English. Protests from the middle class arose about the number of children in immigrant families, their lack and cleanliness, and their unrestrained manners, voices, lifestyles and morals. The xenophobia of the vast majority in the United States guaranteed that the newcomers would have great difficulty altering their social and economic position. Anglo-Saxon Protestant fear of being overrun and sidelined and consequently losing all cultural power led to severe and discriminatory reactions on the part of English-speaking whites born in the United States. When John Fiske published "Manifest Destiny" in *Harper's* in 1885 and Josiah Strong published *Our Country* the same year, they were not writing in order to make converts to their beliefs about Anglo-Saxons, Christianity (Protestantism), and the dangerous new immigrants. Rather, their words articulated and rationalized what was already embedded in the minds of the incumbent population at large. To a great extent, the explanations, conclusions, and fears that resounded so strongly with the mainstream population had been instituted by a number of white elite men who were the contemporary writers and teachers of history.

They developed theories about the course of world history, analyzed information, and came to conclusions which they then published as fact. They were in a position to transmit of the story of human existence and to offer their own thinking as the *reasons* for the course of history. They were the arbiters of popular understandings of the world and of the characteristics of nations and peoples. And they, too, had adopted the popularized Darwinian/Spencerian metaphors of dominant traits, biological inheritance, adaptation, and race as the determinant of culture for explaining the world.

In 1879, John Fiske (1842-1901), historian, lecturer, philosopher, and disciple of Herbert Spencer's ideas about evolution,[77] gave a series of lectures in Boston about the "discovery and colonization of America," which he repeated in London. He was invited back the next year to expound on the more theoretical aspects of development in the United States, as he explains it, and gave three lectures, the last of which was titled "Manifest Destiny." Harper and Brothers published the three lectures in 1885 in their magazine and also in book form.[78] Fiske's thesis was that the process called civilization "means primarily the gradual substitution of a state of peace for a state of war."[79] He believed that the

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[77] Fiske (1842-1901) published also in 1879 a book of essays titled *Darwinism and Other Essays*.
[78] John Fiske, "Manifest Destiny" in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* LXX, March 1885, 578-590, and Fiske, *American Political Ideas Viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History*. (1885. New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1903).
[79] Fiske, "Manifest Destiny," 578.

optimal development of industry required the lessening of warfare and that as military power became unnecessary, men's characters changed so that they "become less inclined to destroy life or to inflict pain," or, in evolutionary terms, "less brutal and more humane." Part of the process involved the formation of political groups that formed part of a larger political group, all of which would resolve differences by legal discussion. In order to protect itself from "barbaric neighbors," however, the peaceful group had to be "strong enough and warlike enough" to dominate non-peaceful groups. Fiske argued then that "obviously the permanent peace of the world can be secured only through the gradual concentration of the preponderant military strength into the hands of the most pacific communities."[80]

Fiske's ideas about history and civilization were the result of a shift in historical interpretation and writing that occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This change was largely in response to the ease with which Darwinian and Spencerian theories could be overlaid on society and used to organize conceptually the whole of human existence. The history profession was no less vulnerable to these theories than was any other occupation. Fiske himself noted as much when he addressed the revolution in history which "'is as great and as thorough as the similar revolution which under Mr. Darwin's guidance

[80] Ibid., 579.

has been effected in the study of biology.'"[81] Edward Saveth writes of the obsolescence of the social-contract theory of history as the search for nationalist origins moved to the paradigm of "remote racial experience."[82] History writers compared cultures, assigned differences and similarities, and applied evolutionary theory to explain "the source both of institutional similarity and of a people's influence and power." Historians now looked for reasons for the like characteristics of "ancient Greece and Rome, modern Germany and England," England and the United States.[83] They found their reasons in racial constructions that placed "Aryans" at the source of civilization, whose migrations had reproduced a specific political heritage that based in their race. Biological metaphors formed the matrix for theories of growth, "either unfolding from a germinal seed or developing in accordance with increasing complexity of its institutions.[84] Saveth traces the line of historians that constructed this historiography in the United States—Moses Coit Tyler, James K. Hosmer, Edward Freeman (who insisted on scientific method in historiography), Herbert Baxter Adams, John Burgess, Albert Bushnell Hart, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and others—who taught that democracy had begun in Teutonic forests and been

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[81] Quoted in Edward N. Saveth, "Race and Nationalism in American Historiography: the Late Nineteenth Century," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 54 (3), Sept. 1939, 421-41; 421.
[82] Ibid., 421.
[83] Ibid., 422.
[84] Ibid., 423.

carried to England and then to the towns of New England. From theorizing about institutions as racial products it was a small step to concluding that supposed racial differences between immigrants from northwest Europe and southeastern Europe threatened the republic. These differences made it imperative that Anglo-Saxon traditions were conserved, those of the "men of English descent who founded it."[85] These historians and their colleagues differed with one another on particular genealogies, but they all attributed societies organized on principles of "individual liberty, local self-government, freedom from external control" to have a common racial ancestry upon which that social organization was contingent.[86] Their ideas became part of university curricula, popular history writing, journalistic writing, and the general social consciousness, and soon became inarguable. Not all historians believed this thinking, but the few dissenters could not combat the popular acceptance of these neat, logical, circular arguments that reassuringly justified the continuation of government by Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic men.

Fiske joined in with this historical theorizing. He embraced evolutionary ideas and racial origins of culture whole-heartedly; he even served as president of the Immigration Restriction League. He narrated world history (beginning for him with Greece and Rome) as a series of unfortunate but necessary conflicts

[85] Ibid., 435.

between orderly peoples and unruly peoples who create "frontier disturbances which call for stern repression from the orderly community."[87] Fiske drew selectively on world history and on popular ideas about natural selection to explain the Anglo-Saxon subjugation of other peoples, arguing that the English and Anglo-Saxon Americans would expand into and dominate the globe because they were more highly evolved than other peoples were. The key to this expansion, Fiske argued, was the formation of political units that were large enough to have a community of interests that the group could protect. This depended on the community's capacity to resolve conflict by legal discussion rather than physical conflict, and the community of interest was dependent upon self-government. The whole process, Fiske argued, hung on the balance between local self-government and self-government as an aggregate of localities. The history of civilization, then, becomes the story of orderly, peaceful communities defeating the "disastrous encroachments of barbarous peoples," thereby continually moving their frontiers outward as they exerted control over barbarians.[88] Fiske begins his article with the expansion of the Roman Empire, proceeds to the "yellow Mongolians known as Huns," and advances quickly through the history of Western Europe to the "conquest of the North American

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[86] Ibid., 440.
[87] John Fiske, "Manifest Destiny," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* LXX, March 1885, 578-590, 579.
[88] *Ibid*.

continent by men of English race, [which] was unquestionably the most prodigious event in the political annals of mankind."[89] He cites England's navy and commercial strength as an explanation for the "colonization of North American and the establishment of plantations in the West Indies," which led to more commercial and naval might. This analysis found particular resonance, as the U.S. Navy was beginning a popularly supported renaissance. Fiske goes on to explain that because of her maritime supremacy, England has

> with unerring instinct proceeded to seize upon the keys of empire in all parts of the world . . . every station, in short, that commands the pathways of maritime commerce, or guards the approaches to the barbarous countries which she is beginning to regard as in some way her natural heritage . . .. No one can carefully watch what is going on in Africa to-day without recognizing it as the same sort of thing which was going on in North America in the seventeenth century . . .. [It] will not much longer be left in control of tawny lions and long-eared elephants, and negro fetich-worshippers.[90]

Fiske saw the history of the United States as the continuation of the expansion of the "English race." With its superior navy, the geographical position of England had allowed it to resist external attack and thus obviated the need for a standing army, thereby allowing it to develop its internal polity more quickly than nations that bordered on other nations. Fiske argued that the "race" that dominated the North American continent would possess the "fittest"

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[89]*Ibid*., 582.
[90]*Ibid*., 587.

political life and would take over any territory that the "race" controlled. He asserted that the process that began with the colonization of

> North America is destined to go on until every land on the earth's surface that is not already the seat of another civilization shall become English in its language, in its religion, in its political habits and traditions, and to a predominant extent in the blood of its people. The day is at hand when four-fifths of the human race will trace its pedigree to English forefathers, as four-fifths of the white people in the United States trace their pedigree today.[91]

Thus, as more "military strength" rests in "the hands of the most pacific communities," warfare can be eliminated forever. Next will be the creation of a world federation, with each group managing its own local affairs and submitting questions of an international nature to a tribunal "supported by the public opinion of the entire human race."[92] We then will live in "a world covered with cheerful homesteads, blessed with a Sabbath of perpetual peace."[93]

These ideas took a somewhat different tone when they were framed by a widely read evangelical minister, but they were essentially the same in content. In 1884, the Rev. Josiah Strong was penning *Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, his hellfire-and-brimstone manifesto warning of the dangers of the torrent of immigrants from strange, foreign lands, whose languages were not English, who were predominantly Catholic, Jewish, or something else other than

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[91] Ibid., 588.
[92] Ibid., 590.

Protestant, and who did not in the least resemble the evolutionary advancement embodied in the typical "American."[94] Strong, who was a Congregational minister, the general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance for the United States, and a fervent promoter of missionary work, issued a diatribe that was a theological twin to Fiske's faith in the strength, supremacy, and moral superiority of the United States as a framework for historical analysis. However, Fiske's grandiose fantasies of divine power working its will through the world-dominance of the English found a more strident religious expression in Strong's work. Strong, too, sought to reinforce and justify world control by the descendants of the Teutonic tribes, but his was a more explicitly Christian mission. *Our Country* was highly successful. While not qualifying as one of Frank Luther Mott's "Best Sellers" (minimum of 500,000 sold), it is in the "Better Sellers" category for that year and may have sold close to half a million copies.[95] Like Fiske, Strong adored English expansionism and praised the Anglo-Saxon people for colonizing and imposing its culture on other peoples. Strong, unlike many other evangelists, had no difficulty reconciling orthodox Christian beliefs with Darwin's revelations: he fully believed that the "survival of the fittest"

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[93] Ibid., 590.
[94] Strong, Josiah. *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*. 1885. New York: The Baker and Taylor Co. for The American Home Missionary Society. 1891.
[95] Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 323.

would favor Anglo-Saxons.[96] In bringing Christianity, civil liberty, and consumerism to "uncivilized" peoples, Anglo-Saxons could not but prevail, as they were God's chosen. Strong well understood that economic domination followed the missionary; he saw that exposure to consumer goods would create the desire for them and that that desire would become a magnet for the Anglo-Saxon/Christian way of life.

In *Our Country,* Strong lays out the reasons he sees for pride among the Anglo-Saxon citizens and all the signs of the defeat and downfall of the "American" way of life.[97] He links together the vast natural resources of the United States, its material wealth and economic dominance, and Protestant Christianity, warning his readers that the influences of the recent immigrants will undermine and eventually destroy the United States as it existed then. His project is the evangelization of the world; he opens his first chapter by saying that the "closing years of the nineteenth century [are] second in importance to that only which must remain first; viz., the birth of Christ." The nation's future depends on what happens in the next few years, he warns, and the "destinies of

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[96] Josiah Strong, ibid.

[97] Josiah Strong, *Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*. New York: The Baker & Taylor Company for The American Home Missionary Society, 1885. (In his preface to the revised edition of 1891, he acknowledges that in the previous edition, he incorrectly reported some of the Pope's "utterances"; he says that he couldn't find any Catholics in order to get the doctrine straight from them because when he wrote the first edition, there was "little agitation of the Roman Catholic question and reliable information was much more difficult to obtain." Strong, 1891, 4.)

mankind, for centuries to come," will be determined by "the men of this generation in the United States."[98] In chapter four, Strong switches from the wealth of resources to an extended alert about the "perils" the United States faces as a result of recent immigration numbers. He says, "During the last four years we have suffered a peaceful invasion by an army more than twice as vast as the estimated number of Goths and Vandals that swept over Southern Europe and overwhelmed Rome."[99] Strong goes on to deplore the moral influence of the immigrants (many of whom, he says, are paupers and/or criminals) and their influence on politics. He warns his readers of the liquor vote, the Mormon vote, the Catholic vote, the socialist vote, the wealth vote (referring to the bribery of voters and the economic interests of wealthy representatives and senators), the Irish vote, and the German vote and condemns their effect on the "complexion" of the cities, which are now ruled by rabble. He rails against the detriment to popular morals and intelligence because of vice and illiteracy brought by recent immigrants.

Strong's penultimate chapter is titled "The Anglo-Saxon and the World's Future." Here, he says that the Anglo-Saxon is the representative of civil liberty

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[98]*Ibid*., 1885 ed., 1.

[99]*Ibid*., 30. (In the 1891 edition, Strong changes the numbers to "ten years" and "four times as vast." 45.)

and of a "pure *spiritual* Christianity,"[100] that the English and American peoples will evangelize the world because God is using "our civilization" as the die with which to stamp the rest of the world and is preparing "mankind to receive our impress."[101] North America will be the great home of the Anglo-Saxon, which is made of "mixed races," all from Western Europe, and which has a "genius for colonizing." God is training the Anglo-Saxon to rule the world, and " 'nothing can save the inferior race but a ready and pliant assimilation' "Strong says, quoting Horace Bushnell.[102] He cites the dominance of the Aryan in Europe and Asia, of the Russians over the Tartars, and the "disappearing" of the "aborigines of North America, Australia and New Zealand . . . before the all conquering Anglo-Saxons. It seems as if these inferior tribes were only precursors of a superior race, voices in the wilderness crying, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'"[103] In step with the contemporary *Ubermensch* images of white men in *The National Police Gazette*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Scribner's*, Strong asks the reader,

> Is there room for reasonable doubt that this race, unless devitalized by alcohol and tobacco, is destined to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others, and mold the remainder, until, in a very true and important sense, it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind? … Let us weld together in a chain the various links of our logic which we have endeavored to forge. Is it manifest that the Anglo-Saxon holds

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[100]Strong, 159-60.
[101]Strong, 165, 178.
[102]*Ibid*., 175. Strong cites Bushnell's *Christian Nurture*, 207, 213. Strong quotes Charles Darwin also in this passage, from *Descent of Man*. Editions uncited.
[103]*Ibid*, 176.

> in his hands the destinies of mankind for ages to come? … Then may God open the eyes of this generation![104]

Strong thus links Anglo-Saxon world dominance with "the coming of Christ's kingdom," surely an irresistible combination to those who had been in control of the culture, however tenuous that control may have seemed at times, and who wanted to stay in control of it. This self-serving logic took the high-ground of moral obligation and helped to pave the way for a national mentality of belligerence, self-righteous interference, and imperialism that makes the involvement of the United States in the rebellion by Spanish colonies seem inevitable. It is noteworthy that Strong closed this chapter on the Anglo-Saxon and the world's future with the following:

> Notwithstanding the great perils which threaten it, I cannot think our civilization will perish; but I believe it is fully in the hands of the Christians of the United States, during the next ten or fifteen years, to hasten or retard the coming of Christ's kingdom in the world by hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of years. We of this generation and nation occupy the Gibraltar of the ages which commands the world's future.[105]

Before ten years had elapsed, the United States formed the Immigration Restriction League to dam the flow from eastern and southern Europe. During the next ten or fifteen years, the United States annexed Hawaii and (under the moral shield of humanitarianism) the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and established virtual sovereignty in Cuba. It engaged in contests with Germany and Great Britain over possession of Samoa. In a

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[104] *Ibid*. 178-79.

coup for proponents of racist hierarchy, the U.S. Supreme Court would pronounce in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 that "separate but equal" public facilities separating those with African ancestry from those with European ancestry did not violate the Constitution. The ideology of Anglo-Saxon heterosexual male dominance and containment of all other forms of life was swallowing the world.

White male supremacy was exacerbated by representations of Africans and Pacific islanders that only affirmed the alarmist stance of a Josiah Strong and strengthened the hold of images of powerful white men. Fear of the loss of boundaries characterizes Strong's rhetoric, as it does Fiske's theory of frontier control and impermeable boundaries being the motivation behind territorial advancement. Fiske's theory that it falls to the more stable, powerful nation to keep the peace via military dominance found a warm welcome in popular sentiment that claimed the right to self-determination and to new adventures. The revised interpretations of U.S. history that rewrote national conflicts to emphasize the role of the navy in military success appeared in popular histories and school textbooks. In addition, social agitation about the economy and immigration, and news of European imperialism in Africa and in Asia created a concern with national security. Finally, rampant enthusiasm for engineering

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[105]Strong, 180.

projects and inventions of all types opened the way for popular support of an unprecedented level of military power. The stage was set for the Department of the Navy to reap rich benefits.

The ideology of Anglo-Saxon control of the world had strong advocates in the Department of the Navy, a place where it would have fullest effect by being implemented in the decisions and policies of naval officials, administrators, and commanders. Naval enthusiasts happened to occupy high positions in education and in the government. Mark Russell Shulman writes that Theodore Roosevelt, James Russell Soley, who taught history at the Naval Academy and published widely, and Alfred Thayer Mahan, imperialists all, saw the mission of the United States as the extension of republican government and domestic economic health around the world. These men and others with similar goals were in positions that enabled them to advance this vision.[106] Moreover, even persons in positions of power who did not agree with their imperialistic agenda favored a powerful Navy as a means of defending the nation's coasts. The United States had allowed its naval resources to decay after the Civil War, but in the 1880s this neglect changed to nurture. New officers wanted to rejuvenate the Navy with fast ships capable massive firing power in order to protect interests in the Pacific and in the Caribbean. Without such a fleet, they reasoned, the United States

[106] Shulman, see esp. Ch. 1, "The Influence of History Upon Sea Power," 9-25.

would be all but helpless against the imperialistic incursions of England, France, and Germany, countries which had strengthened their navies and were expanding their control over the globe. The United States must be prepared to defend its interests or to be at the mercy of those three nations. During this decade, Congress provided funding for steel ships for the purpose of protecting U.S. boundaries. This was merely the precursor, however, to taking the next step to large, heavily armed battleships that could meet any European challenge on the sea. The ships and military policies created in the 1890s were made with attack, not defense, in mind. As businessmen and legislators in the United States helped to accelerate the global economy in order to keep its domestic economy healthy, they had to think of transporting goods, keeping those goods safe while being transported, and refueling and repair stations. Such stations meant U.S. control over ports, and this meant U.S. military control and U.S. colonies that could provide even greater access to trade destinations.

The expansion of U.S. power overseas was more complicated than domestic expansion. It involved European nations, and some of these—England, foremost—had naval power far superior to that of the U.S. Although industry in the United States had developed precociously during and since the Civil War with the need for tremendous industrial mobilization, new communication technology, and faster, more accurate small arms, it had not kept up its military

resources afterward. There was no perceived need to do so; sheltered under the Monroe Doctrine and between the oceans flanking the Americas, the United States paid little attention to the notion of participating in international conflict. The Navy in particular had fallen far in priority, and by the start of the 1880s, it was not much more than a junkyard. Even if the ships had been maintained properly, they would have been obsolete. In addition, few of the officers had stayed active in learning about current naval theory and new technology. After the Civil War years (which included the school of experience for the youthful naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan), interest in the military had evaporated in the heat of reconstructing the nation. But while the states were doing battle about how to become reunified, nations overseas were battling over issues of territory, dominance, and colonies in what Bruce Vandervort calls the "flood tide" of European imperialism in Africa.[107] Similar battles were taking place in Asia, as well.

The sinking ship in the advertisement for Pears soap was highly unusual among the images of the merchant marine and the Navy during this decade and next. In 1881, the Naval Advisory Board was formed and proponents of a resurrected Navy argued for a fleet to prepare to compete and win against the fleets of France, Germany, and Great Britain. As European powers continued to

[107] Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830-1914*. See also Peter Hopkirk, *The*

tag islands and pieces of continents, jockeying for positions of strategic advantage, their interests threatened to hem in the U.S. and to leave no geographical padding should they want to attack. In 1883, Congress authorized construction of four steel cruisers, and work commenced as well on clarifying a moribund naval policy and on creating a more unified, rigorous selection and training of personnel. Between 1885 and 1889 Congress approved funding for thirty more ships. At first, the goal was to raid enemy commercial ships and ensure coastline defense, but after the U.S. Census announced in 1890 that the continental frontier had vanished, the focus switched to developing an offensive battleship navy that would hold its own in the major competitions. Between Mahan's teaching, the redefinition of the role of the Navy in an imperialistic world, Congress's passage of the Naval Appropriations Act of 1882 (which curtailed the repair of old ships and retired ships that were too long in the tooth to be useful), and the transformative energies of several Secretaries of the Navy, the standards for an acceptable level of military power moved from obsolescence to avant garde.[108] The administrative infrastructure was ready. Now all that was needed was public support.

Great Game: the Struggle for Empire in Central Asia (New York: Kodansha International, 1994).
[108] Leonard D. White and Jean Schneider, *The Republican Era, 1869-1901: A Study in Administrative History* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958) 154-157.

The periodical press was busy flooding its readers with images of huge, intimidating, monstrous ships that reinforced arguments made by advocates for a bigger Navy. These arguments pushing for the big guns took over the Congressional and cultural debate and the public imagination. The fever spread from such general interest magazines as *Harper's* to such special-interest publications as *Scientific American*. In *Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893*, Mark Russell Shulman details the evolution of the popular demand for huge battle-ships with awe-inspiring weaponry that ultimately swamped any rational analysis of the types of ships and weaponry needed. Eventually Congress made funding decisions based on how impressive-looking ships were, regardless of their performance in the nation's defense. Just as the strong, white male body had captured the popular imagination, so did the enormous, awe-inspiring, and menacing-looking ship. The Navy's first task, as Shulman points out, was to overcome its reputation for corruption, incompetence and uselessness. The Navy had been one of the leads in the drama of the Spoils System, playing the parts of both benefactor and recipient. Navalists realized that its tawdry image was the first issue to address and planned "to reestablish the service as a symbol of the big and heroic in American society."[109] Efforts came from all sides. The presence of the navy was

[109] Shulman, op cit., 46

everywhere: in popular and children's literature, journalism, monuments, expositions, expeditions (Arctic expeditions were similar in popular appeal to the space explorations of the late 20th century), military societies, and music (e.g., John Philip Sousa and the Marine Corps Band) as well as in revisionist military histories.[110] Naval uniforms were adopted by women's and children's fashion designers, and such popular entertainment as Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas furthered the climate of adoration. In these ways, Shulman says, "a complex cultural negotiation between elite and non-elite forces determined the shape of the emerging force."[111]

Shulman argues that because of popular interest, the press worked as publicist for the new navy, with *The New York Times*, for instance, burying inside the paper criticisms of ships by their chief engineers. He cites the *Scientific American*, which featured above-deck projecting guns and ships on seventeen of their fifty-two covers for 1887.[112] The *Atlanta*, for example, one of the new cruisers, was featured on five of the covers. He states, however, that the *Scientific American* agreed with the engineers' criticisms, "opposing the *Times*' editorial stance." Three years had passed by then: the buried criticisms in the *Times* appeared in February 1884, while the *Scientific American* criticisms ran three and

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[110] Ibid., 46.
[111] Ibid., 47.
[112] Ibid., 37, 38.

a half years later, in July 1887. Despite the *Scientific American*'s criticisms, Shulman states that the summer of 1887 was a time when "the editors would only become more enthusiastic about the new navy in 1887 as their discourse became more political and more interested in the sexy technology of 'big-ness.'"[113] In September, though, an article about the warship *Chicago* stated that the public believes the new ships to be "armor-clad, or at least shot-proof. This is not so. … [they are] not thick enough to prevent entrance of a good-sized rifle bullet." The writer then mentions the new Krupp gun and suggests that the United States might consider building a "dozen or two of the familiar, flat, homely American monitors, and add extra thicknesses of metal to their turrets as the big guns grow bigger and keep our modern cruisers out of their range altogether."[114] Concerned again with the ships' performance in battle, in December of 1887 that the *Scientific American* wrote a strong criticism of Naval Advisory Board, saying that if other navies attacked these ships, "they could neither fight nor fly from them." It damned the *Atlanta* and the *Boston* as "ill adapted if not positively unfit for the purposes of war" and criticized the *Chicago*

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[113] Ibid., 112. However, Shulman says also that in the July 2, 1887 issue, the magazine said that the ships were both slow and poorly armored: " 'ships that can neither fight nor run away.' A few pages later, he cites a July 16 piece that embraced the new ships and approved their appearance: " 'Everything here is hard, severe, straight.'"

[114] *Scientific American,* Sept. 17, 1887, 180.

for its complicated machinery that often put the ship in port for repairs.[115] Nonetheless, the public responded positively to ships and guns of astounding size, which these cruisers certainly were. This fascination resulted in an emphasis on a muscular visuality that was developed for its own sake, and ultimately, was out of touch with technology and modern warfare. Naval strategists emphasized "popular elements of bigness and heroism as embodied in the battleship and consequently slighted the navy's traditional but less salable duties: coastal defense and protection of shipping."[116] While other naval powers were building a fleet of torpedo boats, the U.S. poured all of its naval appropriations into behemoths. The U.S. Navy had needed public support to expand, and it took the support it got. Even the genteel clientele wanted to see guns, and so *Scribners's Monthly* and later, *Scribner's Magazine* obliged with such illustrated articles as "American Arms and Ammunition," (*Monthly,* January 1880), "Modern Aggressive Torpedoes," and "From Port to Port with the White Squadron," (*Magazine*, April 1887; Oct. 1990).

Shulman says that overall, historians have given to Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Thayer Mahan the most responsibility for popularizing the new navy. He differs somewhat with that assessment, saying that Roosevelt was instrumental in this effort, but that Mahan "had limited influence in the U. S.

[115] Ibid., Dec. 3, 1887, 352.

until the end of the century."[117] Although Mahan's name may not have popularly known at first, he did publish in popular periodicals, and his ideas had tremendous influence on the students, soon to be officers, at the Naval War College, and on the Department of the Navy. Additionally, his ideas of national survival and of the domination of limited resources were part of the culture. His endorsement of having the largest battle ships and dominion over the seas can be seen in numerous periodicals during this time. Granted, while Mahan was still on his tours of duty before he was indoctrinating the naval students at Newport, Roosevelt was making himself known in New York politics, exploiting the public relations potential of ranching and hunting in the Dakotas, traveling widely, writing several books (among them *The Winning of the West*), and working in Washington for the Civil Service Commission. Certainly, he was achieving celebrity, but I would argue that Mahan had as much to do with popularizing the Navy as did Roosevelt. Mahan's name became shorthand for a school of naval theory and policy that influenced teachers, military officers, politicians, public officials, commercial and financial power brokers, the media, and private citizens. He lacked Roosevelt's personal charisma and gift for media exposure, but his ideas had an enormous range, even for those who may not have known his name.

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[116] Shulman, 47.

Mahan, born in 1840, was a member of the Naval Academy class of 1859 and an officer in the Civil War. After the war, he was in the Asiatic Squadron and in the early '80s, in the Pacific Squadron. After his service on the Pacific Squadron, he wrote the lectures that he used at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, where he taught naval history and strategy and served as president. His ideas were published in 1890 in *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, a book that Theodore Roosevelt endorsed and which itself was influenced by Roosevelt's own book, *The Naval War of 1812*, published in 1882 when Roosevelt was twenty-four.[118] He was interested in issues of international position and power to be gained by having the means to control land and resources in strategic spots around the world. In *The Influence of Sea Power*, he presented the case that the U.S. needed new overseas markets for its agriculture and manufacture if it were to continue to prosper, and a merchant marine and overseas ports to service those markets. As history had long taught, overseas trade required a strong navy to protect ships and overseas possessions.

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[117] Ibid., 46.

[118]In 1889, President Harrison had just appointed Roosevelt as Civil Service Commissioner. In 1895, the mayor of New York appointed Roosevelt to be one of four York Police Commissioners; the other three elected him president of the New York Police Board. Roosevelt believed that the war between England and the U.S. in 1812 would not have occurred if after 1800 "America . . . had been willing to go to the expense of providing a fleet of a score of ships of the line." Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography*, 209.

In addition, a powerful Navy could ensure, during war, access to U. S. ports for shipping by neutral nations.[119]

The arguments for a bulked-up navy and for increasing U. S. power on the world stage were merely an extension of the ideology of white masculine dominance, for neither gender nor race was an issue incidental to the discourse of international role. The rhetoric of a powerful navy, extension of the reach of the United States beyond its Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and an ideology of using strength to ensure dominance slipped easily into the groove chiseled in mainstream consciousness by the rhetoric of the rightness, goodness, safety, and divine intention of white male muscularity. Height, weight, girth, speed, stamina, destructive capabilities--men, guns, ships: they were easily interchangeable. It all came down to the same definition for effectiveness and self-determination in the public world: how can a man, or a gun, make its presence felt as more powerful than the presence of another like itself? As we can see from *Harper's* illustration of the missile for the Krupp gun, a phallus that is as tall as the white man standing next to it, the question of whose gun was bigger and could inflict more damage than anyone else's gun was a question of critical importance (fig. 3.18). In the illustration, the phallic missile stands in for the man standing next to it: the missile *is* the male body. The missile is a phallus,

[119] White and Schneider, 161.

the man's body is a phallus; missile-phallus-man are one, and all are representative of the United States as a phallic world power. The article for which this illustration was drawn is called, "The Fifteen-Inch Pneumatic Gun."[120]

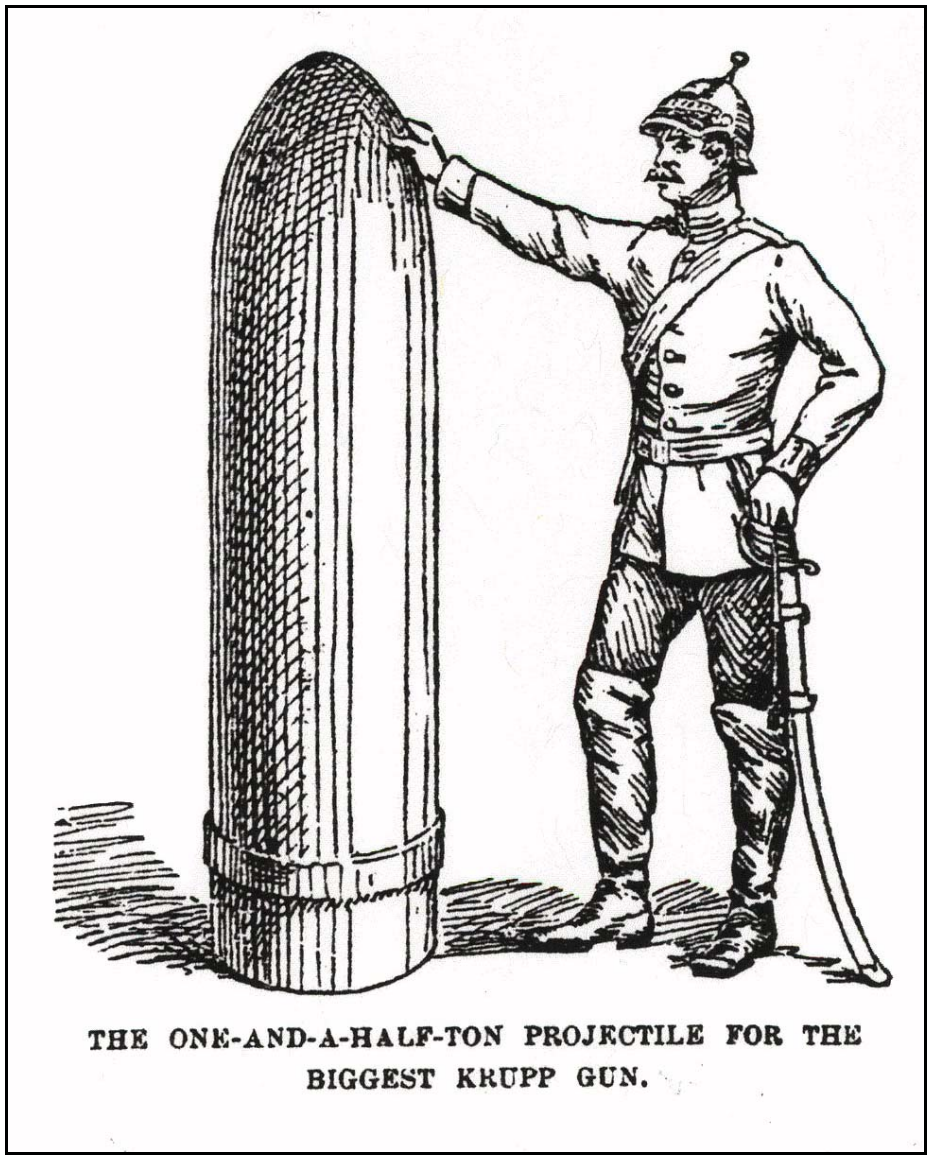

Fig. 3.18. "The one-and-a-half-ton projectile for the biggest Krupp gun." *Harper's Weekly*, August 18, 1888: 615.

[120] *Harper's Weekly*, V. XXXII, No. 1652, Aug. 18, 1888, 615. This is the projectile for the Krupp gun about which the *Scientific American* had informed its readers on Sept. 17, 1887.

The text details the life span of guns, their force, their measurements, and their destructive capacities. The gist of the article is that various nations are in a frantic competition to make the biggest, most destructive gun. As soon as one nation make the biggest, some other nation gets back to the drawing board. The most important phallic icon, however, was the male body itself. The images in the *Gazette*, particularly those that display the male body in a static pose, represent those bodies as being erect and stiff, often posed as if to strike a blow. As Lynda Boose, Susan Jeffords, and others have noted, the visual hypermasculinization of the human form represents that form not only erect but also expanded, the muscles looking as if they have been inflated.[121] The phallus as weapon, as sex, as race, as class, as nation, as male body cannot be illustrated

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[121] Lynda Boose, "Techno-Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal': From the Quagmire to the Gulf," *Cultures of United States Imperialism,* ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 581-616; Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). Other excellent discussions of the white male body as phallus, as weapon, and as metaphor for national power include Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body," *Michigan Quarterly* Review Vol,. 32, No. 4, Fall 1993, 696-737, and Bordo, The *Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999); Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1997), Joseph Kestner, "The Representation of Armour and the Construction of Masculinity in Victorian Painting," *Nineteenth Century Studies* 7 (1993), 1-28; J.A. Mangan, ed., *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Aryan Fascism* (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 1999); George Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Suzanne Harper, "Subordinating Masculinities/Racializing Masculinities: Writing White Supremacist Discourse on Men's Bodies," *masculinities* Vol. 2, No. 4, Winter 1994, 1-20;

better than with the *Gazette*'s image of Eugen Sandow, "The Champion Hercules," published on December 7, 1889.[122]

Sandow stands before us at a forty-five-degree angle, one leg turned to face us directly (fig. 3.19). He is relaxed, hands folded over abdomen, right biceps and shoulder the center of attention. This image of static, narcissistic, white supremacist power is a far cry from the Goss-Ryan fight illustration, which appeared in 1880. Sandow's image conveys an unmistakable sense of white male dominance, control, and display. Gone is the pretense of showing a fight scene in order to display the male body: the sole purpose of this image is to display the supermuscular white male. Sandow is comfortable with the act of showing off his body. He knows how to stand to give the slimmest profile to the hips, and he knows how to appear at ease while at the same time flexing his muscles to display the definition of his deltoids, biceps, and triceps. The nonchalance of his attitude while displaying the exaggerated muscular development creates an impression of coolness and normality, as if every (white) male can achieve this look with only a consistent exercise program of gymnastics and weightlifting. This hyper-masculine look became the new standard in the 1890s, as a crude anthropometry, strength contests, bodybuilding competitions, and advertisements for penis-enlargers raised the stakes in the *Gazette* with respect to

[122] *National Police Gazette* V. LV, No. 639, Dec. 7, 1889, 13.

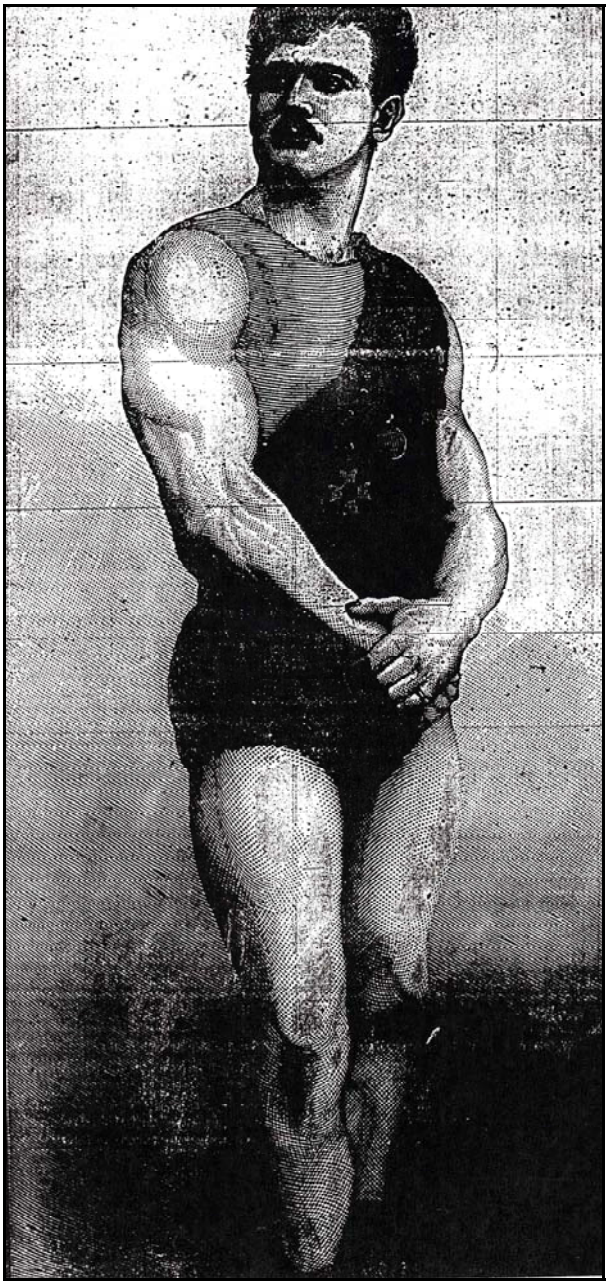

Fig. 3.19. “The Champion Hercules—Eugene Sandow, who might have made the ancient Samson hustle to retain his laurels as a man of muscle, if Samson were here now.” *National Police Gazette*, December 7, 1889, 13.

what it took to be masculine enough. These cultural productions found modes of expression at middle-class and upper class levels of society as well, in other publications and in other forums. Muscular masculinity extended its reach globally, winning the honor of being the metaphor for the United States as a world power. At this time, the United States was a light heavyweight contender among the imperial Western European nations, self-advertised in its own press as impregnable, intimidating, and arguably the future impresario of international relations.

Chapter Four

The White Male Pinup and Empire

The appearance of the full-length portrait of Eugen Sandow in the *National Police Gazette* in December 1889 emblematized, metaphorically and literally, a number of the concerns of white upper-and-middle-class men. Sandow stands as pictorial testimony to the domination of Aryan whites over all other peoples and of muscular white males over females and over other white males who did not meet this increasingly exacting and hegemonic stereotype for masculinity. His face, which also conformed to reigning notions of Anglo-Saxon male beauty, reinforced his status as a racial icon. Dr. Ramon Guiteras, a former amateur boxer, called Sandow " 'about the most perfectly developed specimen of a man I have even seen,'" and Dudley Sargent, who had seen thousands of physically fit white males, said he was " 'the most wonderful specimen of man I have ever seen.'"[1] Popular demand for thousands of publicity cards, called "cabinet cards," displaying Sandow's image, corroborated Guiteras's and Sargent's opinion. The camera and the press were among Sandow's best allies, as they are to anyone who makes a living from his or her appearance. Sandow's image more than his weight-lifting ability secured his celebrity and wealth, and it provided

[1] John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 39, 45. Sargent repeated this statement

the benchmark for another cultural renovation of the definition of physical manliness. As a standard for middle-class and elite men, the imago was even more inspiring, because with respect to class and race, it was closer to their own identity (real or imagined) and therefore possibly attainable. For all but a few, however, it was even more out of reach, more exclusive. Men in all strata of culture had admired John Sullivan for his power and his arrogance as a fighter, even men who never would have recommended him as a model for manhood. Sullivan's popularity raised prizefighting in public opinion, relocating it from the seamy underworld to "a more respectable mass entertainment that attracted solidly middle-class and professional patrons as well as the working classes."[2] Sargent examined Sullivan at one point before another match for the heavyweight championship and found that while the boxer had a strong body that could inflict punishment, that body was not well proportioned, symmetrically developed, or free enough of fat to serve as a stand-in for a Greek statue. As John Kasson kindly understates it, "No one could mistake Sullivan for a classical nude; he is merely a man undressed."[3] Sandow, on the other hand, presented beauty as well as power in a white (and Prussian) male body, and in doing so he reified all racist and sexist notions to an extent not seen before. This

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nearly ten years later, calling Sandow " 'the most perfectly developed man the world has even seen.'" Kasson, 75.

[2] Kasson, 41.

body was living confirmation of the arguments and theories of white male supremacy that had constituted the most emotional debate in mainstream discourse, and it vindicated the claims of revisionist historians, expansionists, medical doctors, anthropologists and ethnologists, politicians, and missionaries of Christianity. Sandow possessed the "imperial body."

The message about the superiority of white male strength was not confined to individual human bodies. Sandow's hard, perfectly developed body and attitude of self-assurance constituted the perfect visual matrix for the further articulation of the goals, drives, and fantasies of dominant actors and of popular opinions into other renditions of the image of that awe-inspiring male form. Descriptions of Sandow's body could be reworked and used to describe several of the current political visions that vied for definition of the nation, including those of Anglo-Saxon male supremacy, U.S. governance of Cuba and the Philippines, and moral guidance and management of the world. His body as metaphor could be internalized in the public, legislative, and presidential imaginations and reappear as greater national need/desire for a more intimidating military body, one that would eventually be at the forefront of all nations. It could also reappear in public discourse about manhood, manliness, class, and moral duty, and in updates in the media about the latest technology:

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[3] Ibid., 44.

the biggest gun, the most impenetrable warship, the fastest cruisers, the greatest number of ships, the most explosive power. In discussions about international relations overseas, the "perfect man" was the rationale for policies regarding some European powers ("they" are like "us"—we have only to watch that they cannot dominate us) as well as nations, territories, and peoples that could be assisted, protected, taught, enlightened, improved, annexed, colonized, and controlled for their own benefit and thus for the benefit of all. The most acrimonious debates were those about admitting the latter peoples into the U.S. polity. The central question was this: should peoples whom the United States helped be allowed into the governing structure, or should they be kept out? The trick, for advocates of expansion overseas but retention of the governmental status quo, was how to achieve control without incorporation or policies that would belie the nation's glory as the beacon of democracy. Dominance was one issue; assimilation was quite another. The hegemonic white male lawmakers still had not been willing to risk even the political transformation that they imagined would ensue if they permitted their own mothers, wives, and daughters to vote. Those who had permitted the legal and theoretical assimilation of African American men into government had not seen to its full and permanent practice. This chapter shows ways in which the metaphor of the "perfect man" became the continual referent, however unconsciously used, for the sculpting of new forms

of nation-building and international business, colonialism and imperialism. In the words of Josiah Strong, "Does it not look as if God were not only preparing in our Anglo-Saxon civilization the die with which to stamp the peoples of the earth, but as if he were also massing behind that die the mighty power with which to press it?"[4]

With respect to physical power, the *National Police Gazette* continued its weekly flow of white male muscularity into the worldviews of its readers. It fed (and fed from) the growing public obsession with statistics and virility in the world of sports, taking the image of the physically hegemonic male one step further over the decade by re-representing it explicitly as the consumer commodity that it was: the pin-up picture. The *Gazette* opened the decade with the usual fare of fight scenes and male-body display it had offered in the 1880s; by the end of the nineties, it was publishing as many images that portrayed male glamour and sexual charisma as it was images of athleticism and sports. An example of the typical *Gazette* fight-scene is seen in the January 1890 page of vignettes titled "That Bruges, Belgium fizzle," which features Australian Frank P. Slavin overpowering Jem Smith, of England (fig. 4.1). In one vignette, Slavin hits Smith on the jaw; in the centerpiece, Slavin knocks Smith "clean off his feet." The caption reads "The monkey and parrot time that Frank P. Slavin, of

[4] Strong, *Our Country,* 165.

Australia, had with Jem Smith of England, on Dec. 23, 1889."[5] This image continues the tradition of muscular white males being displayed in the service of illustrating a fight, rather than in self-display as the sole purpose. The central interest, presumably, is the fight and its theater of dominance and defeat. The *Gazette* also continued in its promotional tradition of advance notice of the bodies that soon would be engaged in combat, as in the 1891 illustration of Ted Pritchard, an English champion middle-weight.[6] Pritchard, who is shown as massively built, is seated at an angle to the viewer, his arms crossed to give maximum display of the biceps, triceps, and pectorals. Interspersed with its traditional images of fighters, however, the *Gazette* increased its representation of overt masculine display, with onlookers included in the picture, as in the image of Jake McAuliffe, who won a match in September 1892, in New Orleans.[7] McAuliffe, who wears only a piece of fabric tied around his hips, stands at an angle facing away from the reader, his hands clasped behind his head. The only viewers are those in the illustration, and they study the athlete in a closed viewing session. One man crouches next to McAuliffe, his hands hidden from the viewer but raised to McAuliffe's groin. Another man stoops over and gazes

[5]*The National Police Gazette*, January 14, 1890, 16.
[6] Ibid., March 14, 1891, 13.
[7]Ibid., September 17, 1892, 8.

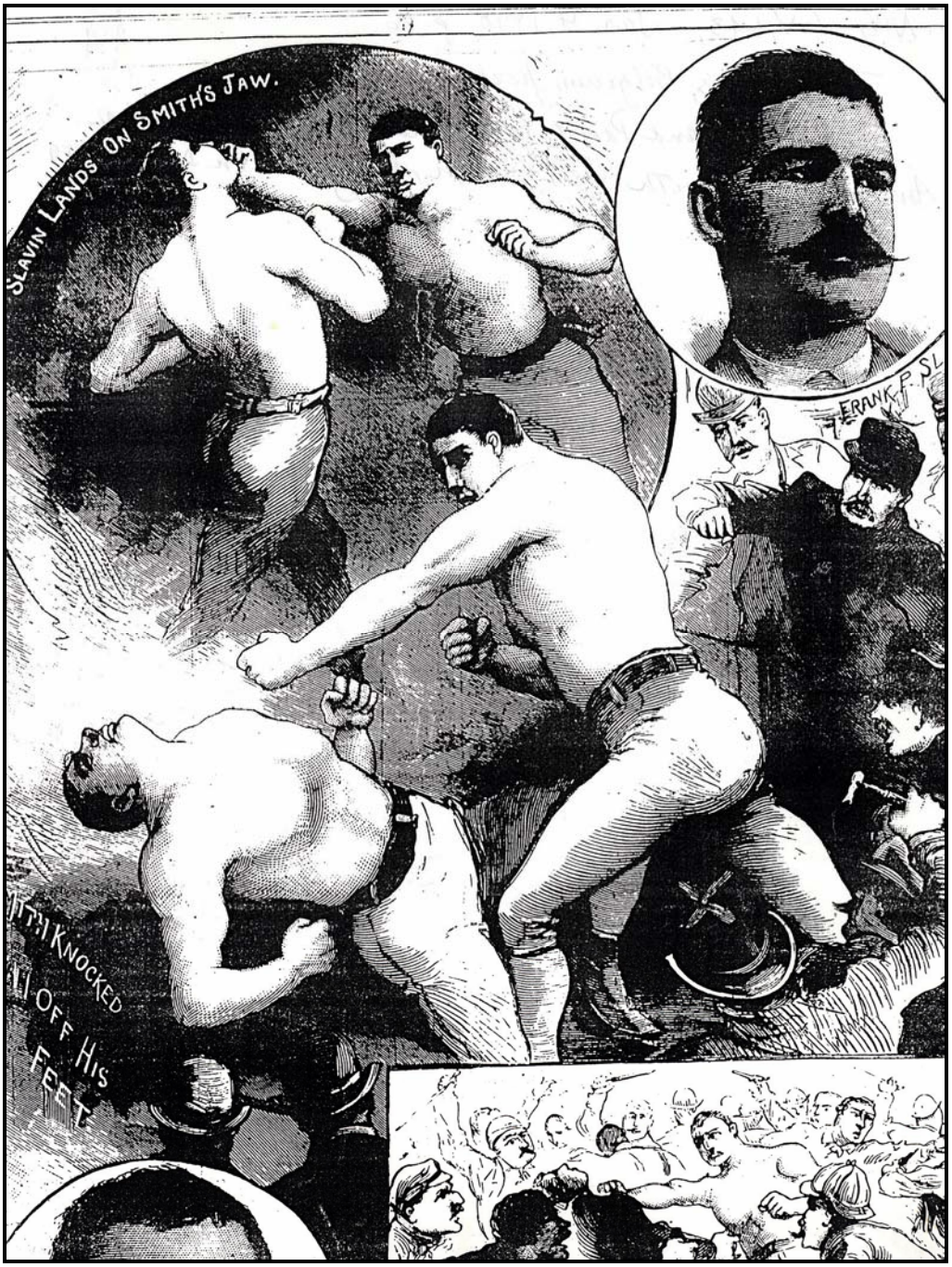

Fig. 4.1. "That Bruges, Belgium fizzle. The monkey and parrot time that Frank P. Slavin, of Australia, had with Jem Smith, of England, on Dec. 23, 1889. *National Police Gazette*, January 4, 1890, 16.

at the athlete's crotch. Several others stand and look. Although the reader does not have a frontal view of McAuliffe, the other men in the illustration are fully engaged in spectatorship of the male body, not a fighting body, but a stationary body engaged in exhibition. Here, the body itself is an event, and the men in this image are spectators, just as they may have been previously at the boxing match. The *Gazette* had reserved this kind of self-acknowledged decorative and sexualized display for the women it used in erotic representation. The blatant objectification of the body was a place that the female body had inhabited in the *Gazette*. It was a thing to be viewed by men, as in "Cora Deutsch and Lillie D'Auban as they appear during their act in Oscar Hammerstein's famous aerial ballet" (fig. 4.2).[8] Unlike McAuliffe, Deutsch and D'Auban are holding hands and looking at each other, their floating bodies turned to the viewer for full inspection and their legs demurely crossed at the ankles. The reader consumes this image of vulnerability, while in the McAuliffe illustration, the men in the illustration are the viewers, making the reader a double voyeur--viewing the back of McAuliffe and catching the men in the act of gazing at an unclothed athlete. The readers, however, are denied the "real" view, which the men in the illustration have.

[8]*Gazette*, Dec. 5, 1896, 4.

As sports found a place in mainstream culture, boxing moved into the purview of the middle-class reader. *Harper's Weekly* continued the coverage of college athletics it had begun in the 1880s and extended its reach with such photographic displays as its twenty-six-image double-spread array of wrestlers demonstrating various holds, a few lines of copy beneath each image.[9] Boxing's entrée into periodicals termed "genteel" in the publishing business was smoothed by the popularity of the sport and by the ongoing debate about its powers for increasing manliness versus its dehumanizing reenactments of brutality. In 1887, *Outing*, a publication devoted to recreation, leisure, and such gentlemanly amateur sports as hunting, fishing, cycling, yachting, college athletics, fencing, archery, polo, and the like published an illustrated article about boxing. The author defends boxing as a "noble and manly exercise" that "when practiced by gentlemen as a means of muscular development" cannot be excelled for "grand and lasting results." The entire first page is given to describing the physical benefits a man will accrue by boxing. He will move freely and gracefully, and his "head is carried erect and firm, supported by a full, strong neck, in which the muscles stand out clear and well defined." Of course such a man will have broad shoulders, "full and rounded biceps," and "the

[9] *Harper's Weekly*, March 26, 1892, 305, and Caspar W. Whitney, "Wrestling," *Harper's*, April 23, 1892, 396-97.

Fig. 4.2. "Cora Deutsch and Lillie D'Auban. As they appear during their act in Oscar Hammerstein's famous aerial ballet." *National Police Gazette*, December 5, 1896, 4.

elbows follow the beautiful curves of the body." The trunk "presents a rounded, symmetrical, and perfect appearance that is pleasant to look at," and "the full and shapely thighs [work] clean and straight from the hip. … And then, too, how firm, smooth and clear is the skin of the boxer." The author tells us that boxing aids the liver and the kidneys and enhances one's "mental good qualities…that endear him and make him admired and esteemed by his fellow-men." If that were not enough, surely the "natural law of self-protection [is] incentive enough to induce the majority to learn something of boxing." This material, closing with an anecdote about a skilled amateur boxer ("a young graduate of Oxford ') who beat "a vicious and ill-tempered horse" into submission, is only the introduction to a practical guide for the novice boxer.[10] Amazingly, even the staid *North American Review* published "A Defense of Pugilism," which extols the Greeks for their fighting arts, rebuts charges of brutality, cruelty, and degradation in boxing, and warns against allowing civilization and refinement to "be confused with mere womanishness." Boxing improves manliness, says the writer, and the culture needs "a saving touch of honest, old-fashioned barbarism! That when we come to die, we shall die, leaving men behind us, and not a race of eminently respectable female saints."[11]

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[10] Charles E. Clay, "A Bout with the Gloves," *Outing,* Vol. IX, No. 4, Jan. 1887, 359-367.
[11] Duffield Osborne, "A Defense of Pugilism," *North American Review*, April 1888, 430-435.

Prizefighting received a dose of respectability in the early 1890s from a banker-turned-pro boxer. The male body as instrument of power and beauty received an infusion of upward mobility in the rise of James G. Corbett, popularly known as "Gentleman Jim." Corbett possessed an aura of respectability and refinement that previous prizefighters had lacked. His boxing prowess, his background, and his manners enabled him to bridge the divide between the ring and the parlor. His defeat of champion John L. Sullivan in 1892 signaled not only the replacement of one generation by the next, but also a change in the image of boxing itself. In the middlebrow press, boxers now were not necessarily rough and rowdy thugs come up from the working class. The *Gazette*'s 1892 illustration Corbett's victory over Sullivan, titled "The Conqueror and the Conquered," makes clear the transfer of power from one white champion to another. Sullivan sits slumped, defeated at the hands of the younger, more gentlemanly Corbett: a working-class stiff beaten by the fists of the white-collar middle class. Corbett shakes the older man's hand, although the humiliated and exhausted Sullivan does not look at him.[12] Two weeks later the

[12] *National Police Gazette*, September 24, 1892, 8. An anecdote by William Phelps' anecdote about his father, a New England Baptist minister, revealing the elder man's interest in the Corbett-Sullivan match has been quoted frequently in histories of sports as an indication of the popularity of boxing. The passage shows his father's interest in sports, but actually, Phelps here was writing about his own love for playing sports. In a two-paragraph aside, he remarks that men's love of sport cannot be defended rationally. Most men turn first to the sports page in the newspaper because it is "a record of victories," unlike the rest of the news. His anecdote about his father is written to emphasize this widespread male interest in all sports and the influence of the press.

Gazette paid homage to the ex-champion (and publisher/editor Fox's former antagonist) with a full-page, half-length portrait of Sullivan at his prime, the most celebrated, and notorious, fighter of his time. In this image, Sullivan looks strong, young, assured, and indomitable (fig. 4.3). He exudes health and vitality, looking to the side to allow the viewer a voyeuristic view of his steady gaze, resolute jaw, huge shoulders, and massive pectorals and biceps. In this illustration, Sullivan's masculinity and virility are emphasized with a tuft of chest hair, a sexual characteristic that was rarely added to illustrations of that time. Thus, despite his defeat by Corbett, Sullivan's masculinity is irrefutable, his virility explicit--the eternal white male. Two weeks later, the *Gazette* published an illustration of Corbett modeling for a sculpture. The caption says, "Jim Corbett worked in mud. Miss Kuhne Beveridge, the handsome young California sculptress, models the big and good-looking fighter from a pail of clay."[13] (Interestingly, Corbett is positioned with his profile to the artist, who is sculpting a frontal view of his face.) An inset image portrays Corbett standing, his right hand on hip, his left arm extended for viewing by a woman and a man

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On the day after the match, Phelps says that he was reading the news to his father. "I had never heard him mention a prize fight and did not suppose he knew anything on that subject, or cared anything about it. So when I came to the headline, 'Corbett Defeats Sullivan' I read that aloud and turned over the page. My father leaned forward and said earnestly, 'Read it by rounds!'" Phelps then changes the subject. Phelps, 356.

[13]*Gazette,* October 22, 1892, 9.

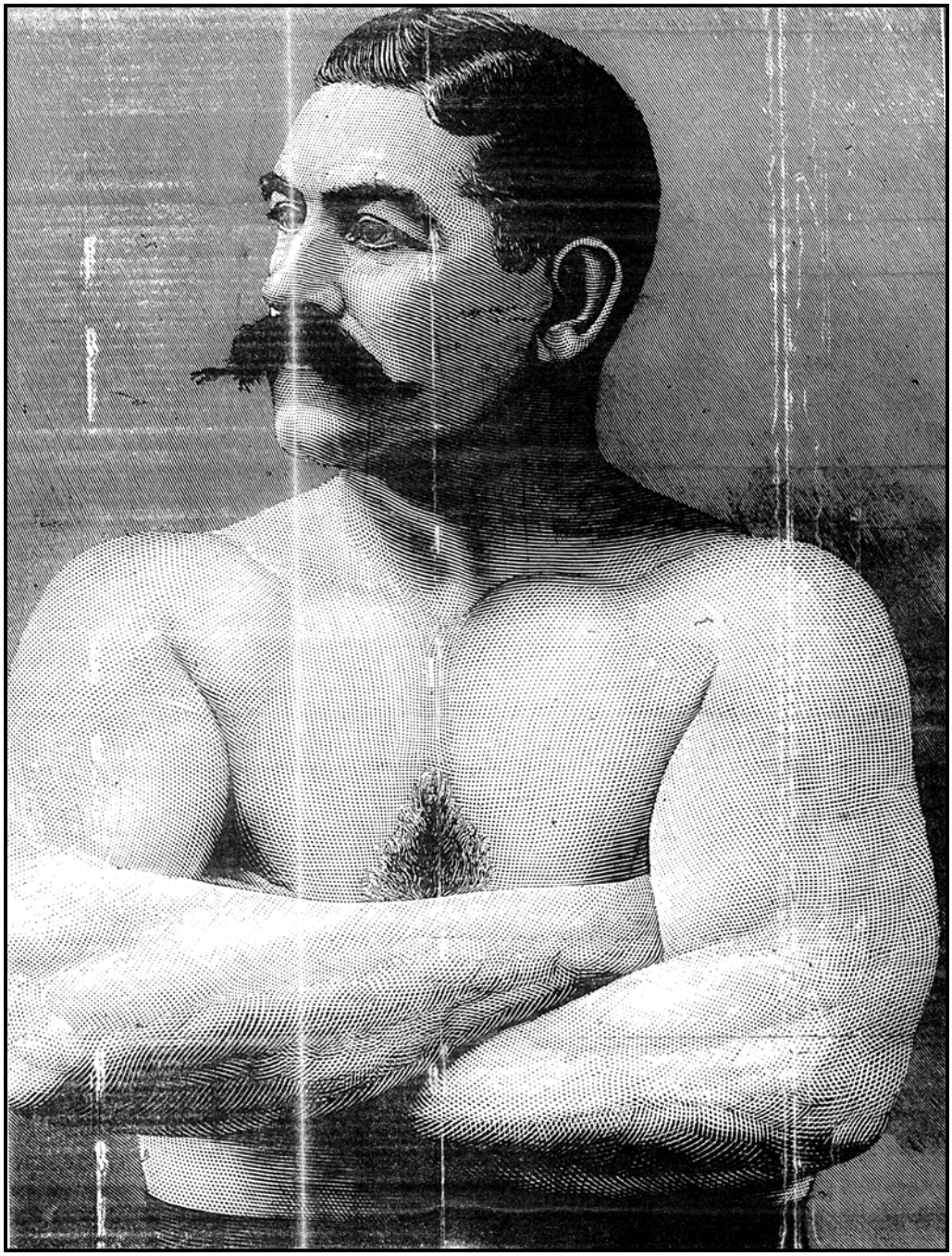

Fig. 4.3. "John L. Sullivan, ex-champion." *National Police Gazette*, October 8, 1892, Supplement.

(possibly the commissioners of the piece) and the artist, who smiles as she touches his left biceps.

Male exhibitionism attained a new level of expression with the arrival in the United States of Eugen Sandow, former circus performer and strongman turned respectable strength-performer, bodybuilding idol and health-and-fitness advocate. The public loved him, and the media made him a sensation; the *Gazette* had been among the first to offer previews of Sandow before his arrival in the United States, as seen in the image from 1889 and in a pinup published in January 1893.[14] This image of his torso displays his dorsal development, his highly articulated muscles making an anatomical topographic map on either side of his spine. Sandow (actually named Friedrich Wilhelm Müller) is a case study in the phenomenon of being in the right place at the right time. He was born in 1867 in Prussia, at the historical moment that Premier Count Otto von Bismarck, General Helmuth von Moltke, and General Albrecht von Roon were capitalizing on their careful takeover of the Prussian government and military in order to dominate Europe. This was the year after Prussia defeated Austria, dissolved the German Confederation, and annexed thirteen hundred square miles of German territory, and four years before it defeated France to completely reverse the

[14]*Gazette*, V. 61, 803, January 14, 1893, 13.

European power structure.[15] Thus Sandow was born into a milieu of great nationalistic pride as well as military and moral triumph, with Prussia vindicating its long years of humiliation at the bottom of the European hierarchy, remanded there in 1806 by Napoleon's forces. He grew up in the atmosphere of full-blown European imperialism, in which power was everything. Sandow had made a name for himself as a strong man in the variety theaters in England, Ireland, and Scotland. In 1893, an agent for a New York firm contacted him and arranged for a tour in the United States. Sandow arrived in New York in the summer of 1893, and the agent found a job for him at the Casino Theater. One evening, he had the good fortune to have in the audience Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., who was scouting for material for his father's theater in Chicago, hoping to capitalize on the presence of the World's Columbian Exposition. Ziegfeld was looking for an act that would be a major attraction at the Trocadero Theater, and when the curtain went up on Sandow, Ziegfeld knew he had found his act. He returned to Chicago to pave the way for Sandow's success, creating a massive publicity campaign that would ensure eager and enthusiastic audiences from the start. David Chapman, Sandow's biographer, writes that on Sandow's opening night, August 1,1893, the Trocadero Theater was "packed to the ceiling," and that the audience contained members of high society as well as the more typical

[15] Wawro, 91. Chapters 4 and 5 detail a concise history of this evolution.

audience for such acts. Sandow regaled the audience with his posing, weightlifting, and other feats of strength, and when his performance was finished, Ziegfeld proposed to the audience that any woman who would donate three hundred dollars to charity could come to Sandow's dressing room and feel his muscles. Chapman relates, "Mrs. Potter Palmer and Mrs. George Pullman immediately stood up and made their way backstage."[16] When the exposition closed, Sandow was promptly signed on by a New York theater, which led to engagements at several U.S. cities over the next three years.

Sandow continued the post-performance exhibitions, garnering an elite audience and cultural cachet with his post-performance salons for a select few. He stood beneath a spotlight for a few patrons and gave demonstrations of his muscles along with commentary about his training. After the performance, he worked the room, allowing this audience to feel his arms and chest. Never one to miss an opportunity, Fox capitalized on the interest in these viewings by publishing illustrations of Corbett and Sandow being admired by a groups of women. One such image from December 1893 shows a naked Corbett being rubbed down by his trainer while several women watch from the side (fig. 4.4). A month later, Fox featured a cover of Sandow at one of his private exhibitions, a group of women visually feasting on him, two of them touching his muscles. The

[16]David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent. Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding*

accompanying article reports that "a thin pair of flesh-colored tights fitted closely to his well-formed legs, a small pair of white satin trunks and light slippers complete his wardrobe. There is a buzz of conversation on the part of the men and an enthusiastic murmur from the women" (fig. 4.5) [17]. Sandow's reception in the United States furthered cultural approval of women's assessment of unclothed men as a commodity that had been on the market for some time for the male audience: the muscular white male body. By the time of Sandow's unveiling in U.S. theaters, interest in the appearance of strength and virility had become widespread. Nevertheless, Sandow's enormous popularity sparked a widespread enthusiasm for weight lifting as image-enhancement and for lifting contests as entertainment. These were the kinds of performances that previously had been limited to vaudeville, the burlesque hall, and the circus. By the mid-1890s, the mass media was glorifying the white male body and giving a forum to the promotion of a national cultural ethos of assertion by physical force. The image of masculinity as a unity of traits of physical adeptness, whiteness, and a body of iron was a familiar and popular trope to paste onto other interests.

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 48-60.

[17] *National Police Gazette*, December 23, 1893, 9; *Gazette*, January 27, 1894, cover.

Fig. 4.4. "Champion Corbett their hero. Pretty women admire the big pugilist, while he trains for his contest with Mitchell." *National Police Gazette*, December 23, 1893, 9.

The rhetoric of manliness had traditionally reiterated control of self; the new consciousness retained that and emphasized control of others as well, and no figure could have had more iconographic resonance than Sandow. The prevalence of his image and his name, and the fact that he was not an emblem of violence, as was boxing, but of composure and self-discipline, made his persona

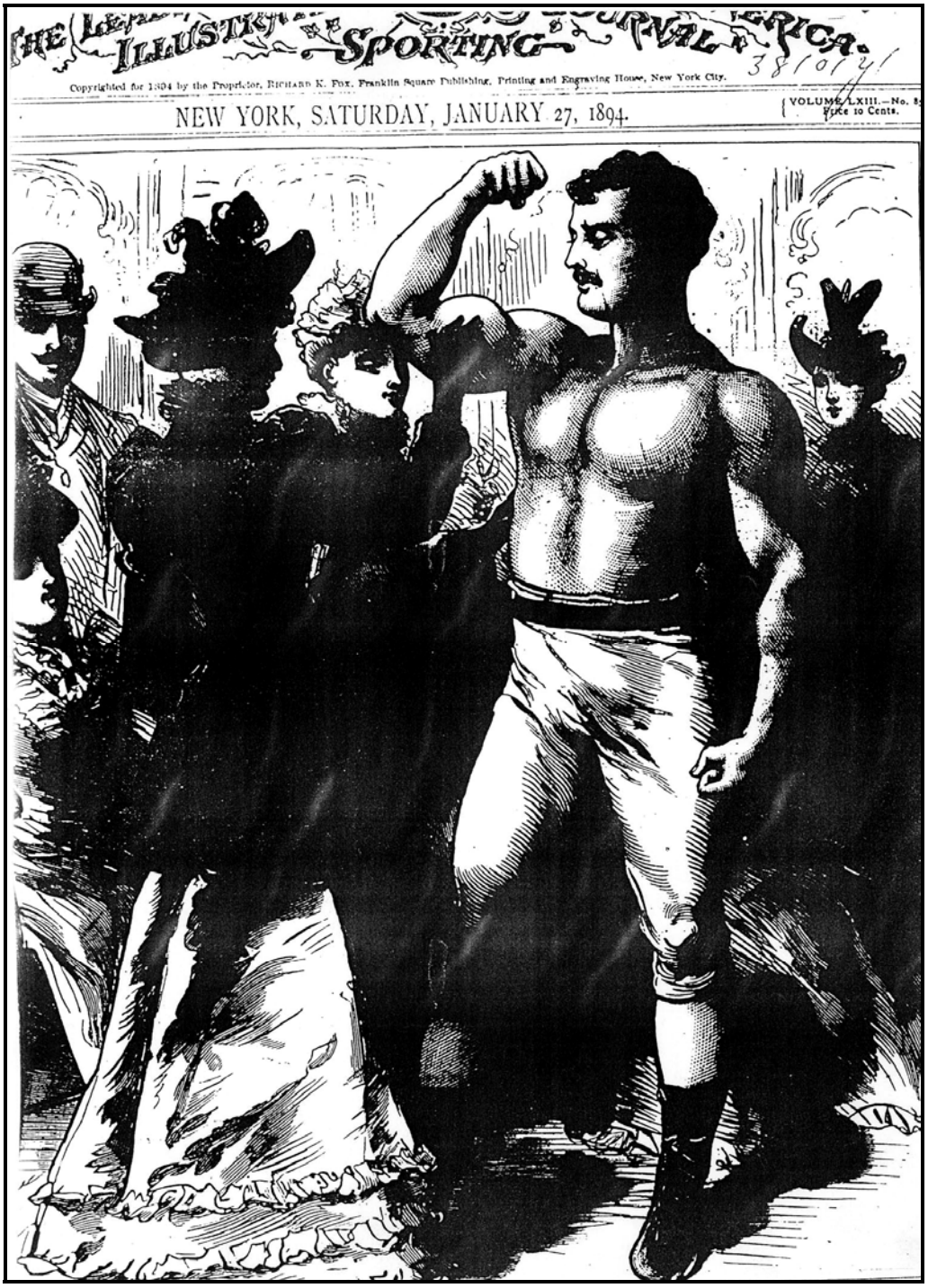

Fig. 4.5. "The Ladies Idolize Sandow. The strong man exhibits his form at select receptions to the pretty creatures." *National Police Gazette*, January 27, 1894, Cover.

and image palatable to everyone, including the women in his audiences. Sandow, more than any other strong man, imbued the image of the fantastically muscular male with an aura of sexiness and desirability that was at once erotic and respectable. Sandow's female audience notwithstanding, the majority of the audience that experienced Sandow's sexiness and desirability were men—men who likely did not think twice about their fascination with this visually wonderful Prussian. White men constituted the market for his pictures, as the advertisements in *The Gazette* for photographs of white male athletes (and white female entertainers) attest. Sandow was for looking at, pure and simple. His image appeared first and most frequently in periodicals aimed at men (*The Gazette*, for example, ran his image before he ever set foot in the United States) and in publications, including books, about strength- raining and bodybuilding, which were written for men. The most telling statement, though, about the receptivity of the culture to images of white male strength and of the nearly nude and completely nude muscular male was the infiltration of Sandow's image into a wide variety of publications and contexts. This widespread recognition of the strong white male as not only powerful but also as a commodity for erotic viewing led to an increased concern among many men about power--virility and performance--as communicated visually. The concern about virility soon permeated popular imagery in everything from the illustrations of battleships to

pictures in advertisements for mechanical and electrical penis-enlargers and sexual restoratives.

The promotion of the white male body as a thing of the highest beauty and power and *ipso facto* the body most fit to rule continued with Sandow's increasing popularity. In its embodiment of whiteness and masculinity, Sandow's muscular image had an iconic power that made a convincing visual argument for the continued reign of the white male, not only domestically but overseas as well. Feats of strength took their place alongside the boxing and wrestling matches as events of interest to the periodical press and as a way for its readers to consume the white male body. Men could become celebrities now just by being strong and good-looking. Rather than performing boxing or wrestling, they could present a legitimate act by performing masculinity: their bodies were the whole show. The portraits of Oscar B. Wahlund and August W. Johnson, Swedish strong men on a tour of the United States, are two such cases (fig. 4.6). The captions tell us that Wahlund "has astonished the crowned heads of Europe by his wonderful feats of strength," and Johnson "has joined fortunes with Oscar B. Wahlund, and is now exhibiting in this country."[18] The rising expectations of the white male as an object of desire and admiration meant that the display of muscular flesh was show enough. The *Gazette* continued to expand the territory

[18] *Gazette*, December 23, 1893, 13.

of white male display with images that were themselves larger on the page. The view of the subjects changed as well. Instead of being seen in action, from a distance that allowed the viewer to see the athletes and their surroundings, the bodies being displayed were now often seen at much closer range. The image of

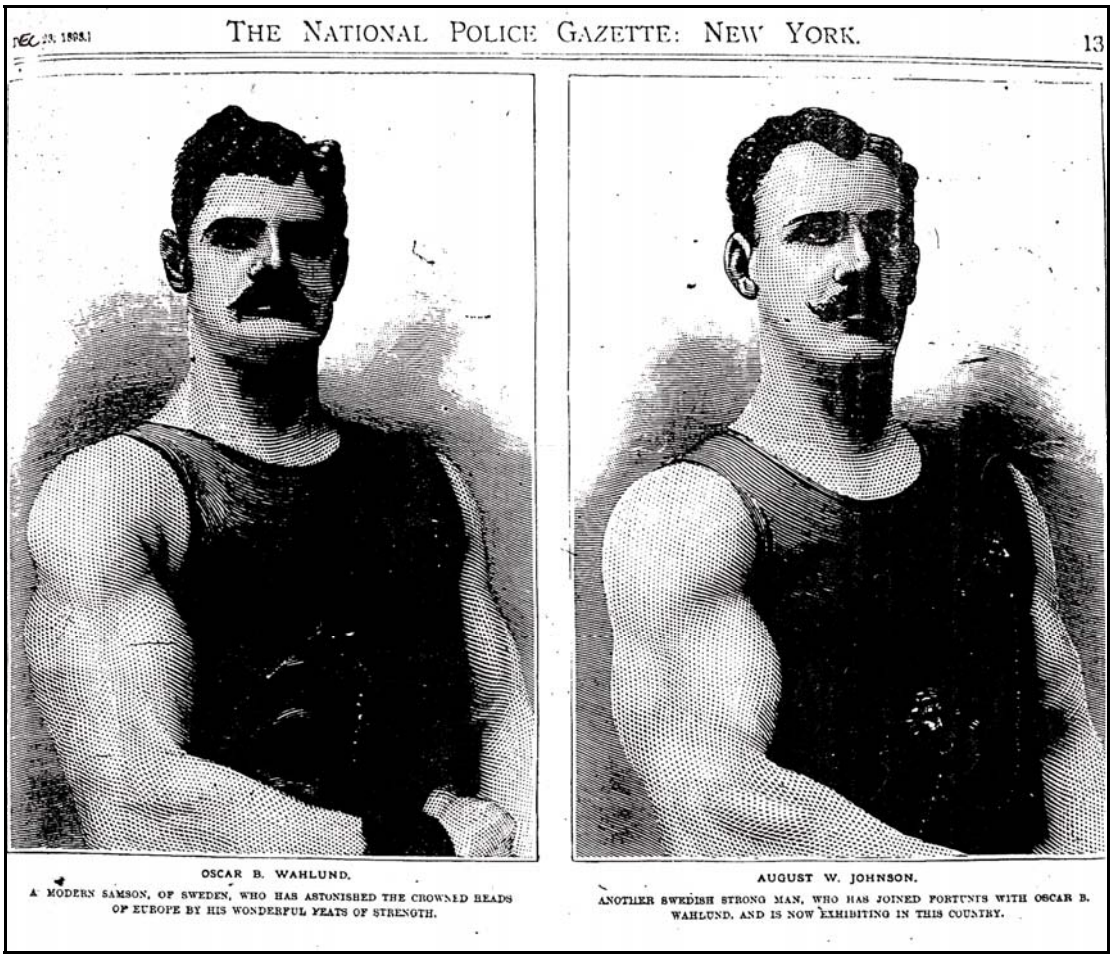

Fig. 4.6. Left, "Oscar B. Wahlund. A modern Samson, of Sweden, who has astonished the crowned heads of Europe by his wonderful feats of strength." Right, "August W. Johnson. Another Swedish strong man, who has joined fortunes with Oscar B. Wahlund, and is now exhibiting in this country." *National Police Gazette*, December 23, 1893, 13.

a torso could easily stand in for the whole man, as it did in the case of Mac Levy, "a nineteen-year-old athlete who does extraordinary things with heavy dumb-bells and weights" (fig. 4.7).[19] By the end of the 1890s, the image often represented only the head, shoulders, biceps, and pectorals of a figure. The only

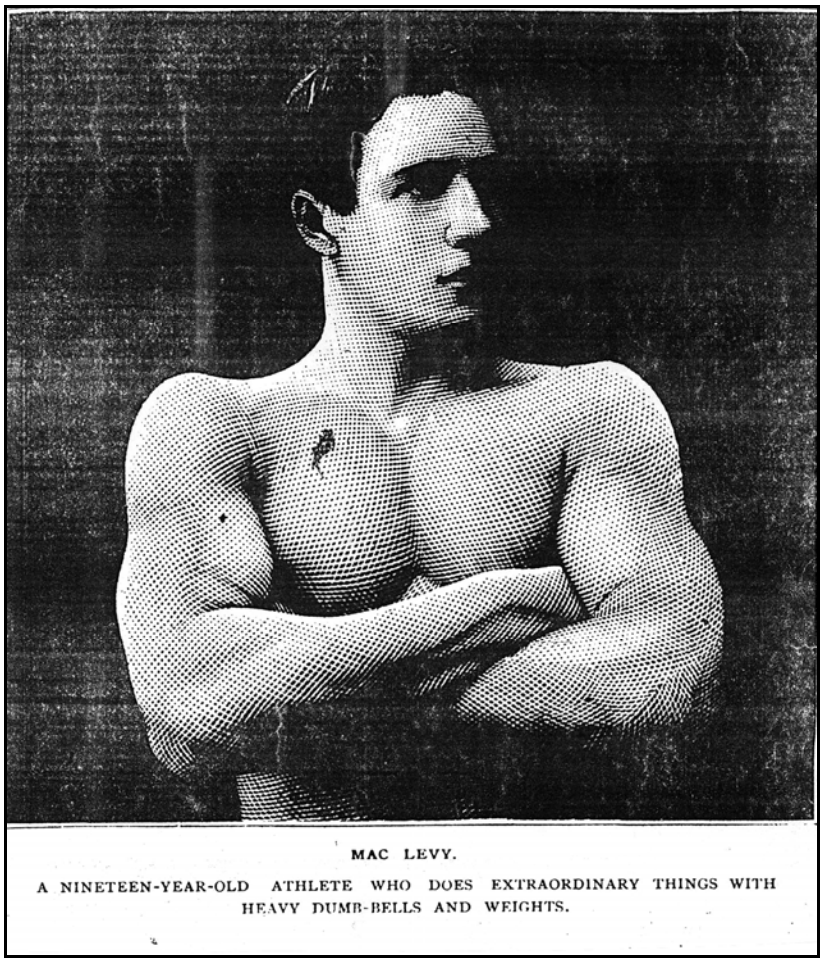

Fig. 4.7. "Mac Levy. A nineteen-year-old athlete who does extraordinary things with heavy dumb-bells and weights. *National Police Gazette*, September 21, 1895, 13.

[19] *Gazette*, September 21, 1895, 13.

way for the *Gazette* to make its illustrations bigger would have been to increase the dimensions of the paper itself. Strength contests became contests for the most beautiful body and audiences could now look at white male bodies without pretending that they were watching a sport; the white male body was itself performance enough.

Other publications could not afford to ignore the trend. *Harper's Weekly*, *The Cosmopolitan*, and *Outing* magazine offered versions of dominant white males. *Harper's* ran such illustrations as the Boston Athletic Club contests, the New York Athletic Club contests, the physical examination of applicants to the New York Police Force (which included a realistically rendered portrait of a huge, muscular man standing naked as another, smaller man takes the measurement around his chest), and the opening of baseball season (fig. 4.8). Recognizing the interest in college sports, *Harper's* ran a full pages of head shots of college champions from Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Amherst, the baseball teams from Princeton and Yale, and various Ivy League crews.[20] It featured a regular column by Caspar Whitney called "Amateur Sport," adding text and images until by the end of the decade the column filled several pages. More literary than *Harper's* was *The Cosmopolitan*, a general interest magazine

[20] "Physical Examination of New York Policemen,"*Harper's*, December 21, 1895, 1213, 1222. This appeared a few months after Theodore Roosevelt was appointed to the New York Police Commission and became its president, elected by the other three police commissioners.

that, like *Harper's*, covered topical subjects and public affairs and was among the nation's leading illustrated magazines in the 1890s.[21] In 1894, it ran an eight-page article by Eugen Sandow titled "How to Preserve Health and Attain Strength" that included nine photographs of Sandow wearing a fig leaf and gladiator sandals, posing to show his muscular development. Some of the poses are an attempt to imitate classical sculptures. Others are not (fig. 4.9). In only one image does Sandow wear clothing, and that is formal attire.[22] Other such magazines as *The New England Magazine* and *Outing* addressed the subject of athletics. *New England* published in 1896 an illustrated article about the resuscitated Olympic games, using halftones of classical sculptures by way of pictures, and *Outing* ran stories about athletics in ancient Greece and in Japan. The article about Japanese athletics opens with line drawings that caricature Japanese men performing gymnastics, although the story describes a meet for wrestling, fencing, and running and includes several more serious

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[21] Mott, *History,* Vol. 4, 480-484.

[22] In this article, Sandow reveals his philosophy of health and his routine and habits for fitness. Once you have "attained health and strength equal to my own, you need not burden yourself with rules. . .", he assures the reader. "My nightly exhibitions . . . supply me, together with a good constitutional every day, or a spin on my bicycle, with all the exercise I need. If I want more, I take it, as I sit reading or smoking, by flicking my muscles." *The Cosmopolitan*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, June 1894, 169-176; 175-76.

Fig. 4.8. "Physical examination of applicants for the New York Police Force—putting prospective patrolmen through their paces." *Harper's Weekly*, December 21, 1895, 1222.

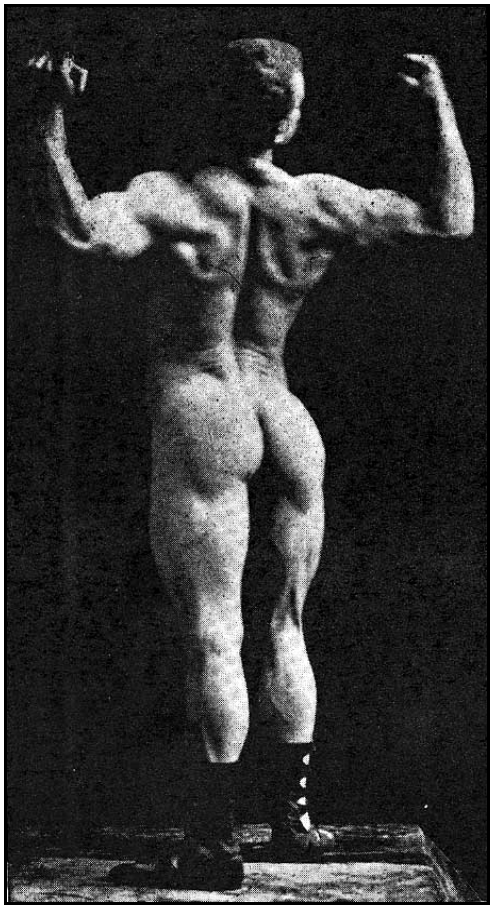

Fig. 4.9. Illustration in "How to Preserve Health and Attain Strength." *Cosmopolitan*, June 1894, 172.

illustrations.[23] *The Century* (the former *Scribner's Monthly*) gave a nod to athletics with a feature about "The Old Olympic Games," which begins by noting that the

[23]Harold Williams, "The Athletics of the Ancient Greeks," *Outing*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, April 1891, 49-53, and John A. MacPhail, "Athletics in Japan," *Outing* V. XXI, No. 3, Dec. 1892, 176-182. MacPhail, claiming illiteracy with respect to the entertainment and rituals that are performed, ends his story with the following anecdote: "A deputation with humor in its eye waited upon the strangers [the foreigners] and asked if they would not come upon the stage and either do battle among themselves or join issue with the victor of the day. The first proposition was declined, but one of the party was not averse to a contest with the gloves. There were no gloves, and a sparring match was arranged. Let the name of the valiant one go unrecorded, as he might be

revival of the Olympic games at Athens "lends a timely interest to the consideration of the great historic contests which will thus be celebrated." Illustrations portray imaginary scenes of the original games.[24]

The trade in books about physical culture was strong, as well. Sandow published *Sandow on Physical Training, A Study in the Perfect Type of the Human Form* (1894), which was dedicated to "Lieut-Colonel G. M. Fox of the British Army" and was "compiled and edited, under Mr. Sandow's direction," by G. Mercer Adam, an ex-captain in the "Queen's Own Rifles, C.M." (Not surprisingly, one chapter is called "Physical Culture in Its Relation to the Army.") In this book, he featured halftones of himself exercising and posing for the edification of the true strength aficionado (figs. 4.10, 4.11). Another book under Sandow's name was *Strength and How to Obtain It* (1897), which featured "full page portraits of the author and some of his pupils" as well as a page giving Sandow's measurements. In addition to reading Sandow's books, those interested in developing strength could study such books as Richard A. Proctor's *Strength: How to Get Strong and Keep Strong* or the new edition of Blaikie's *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So,* reissued in 1899. The new edition eliminated the chapters called "Home Gymnasiums" and "Half-Trained Firemen and Police,"

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disqualified for professionalism; but it may be set down that he brought such foreign influence to bear as will enhance the esteem of American athletics among the Japanese." MacPhail, 182.

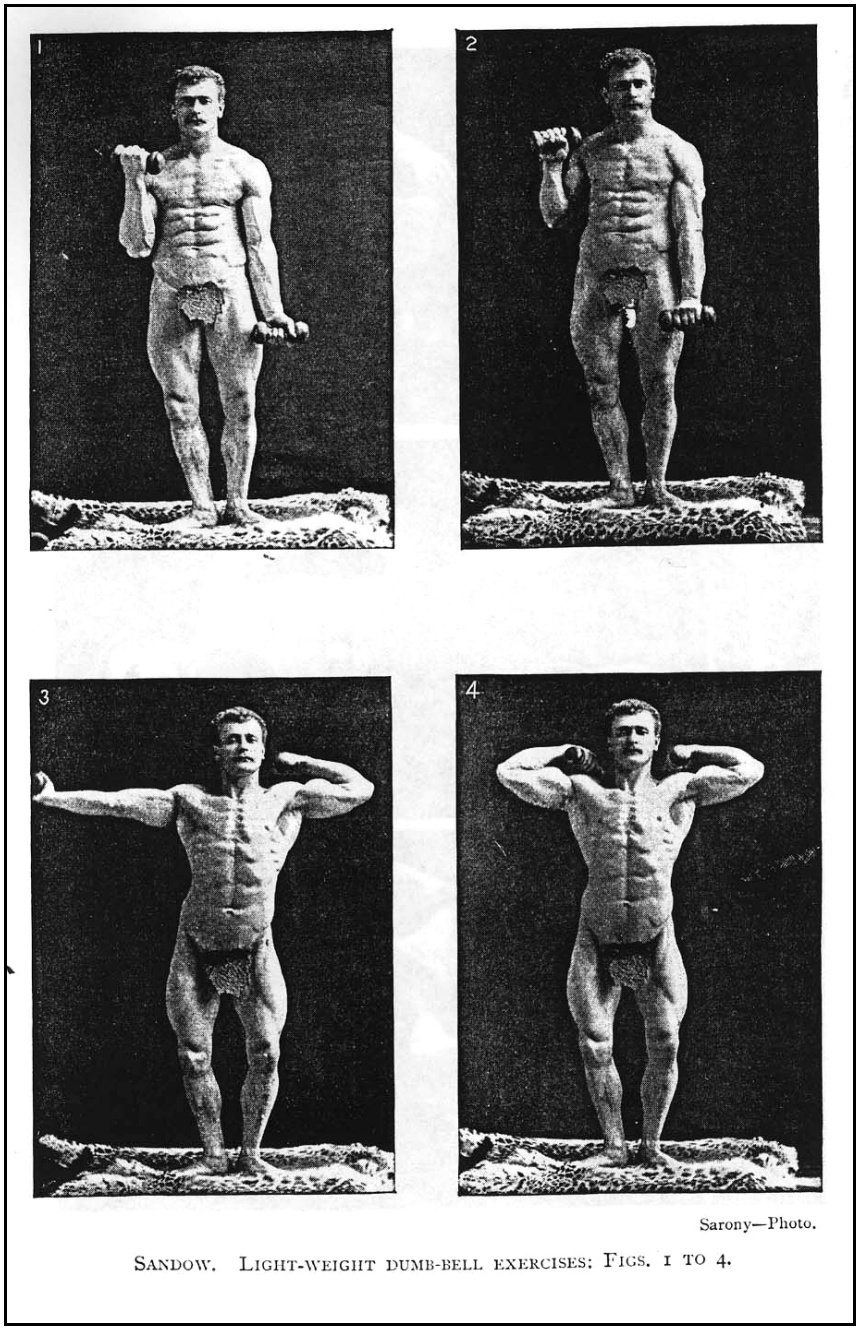

Fig. 4.10. "Sandow. Light-weight dumb-bell exercises." *Sandow on Physical Training* (New York: J. Selwin Tait and Sons, 1894), n.p.

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[24] Allan Marquand, "The Old Olympic Games," *The Century Magazine*, Vol. LI, No. 6, April 1896, 803-816.

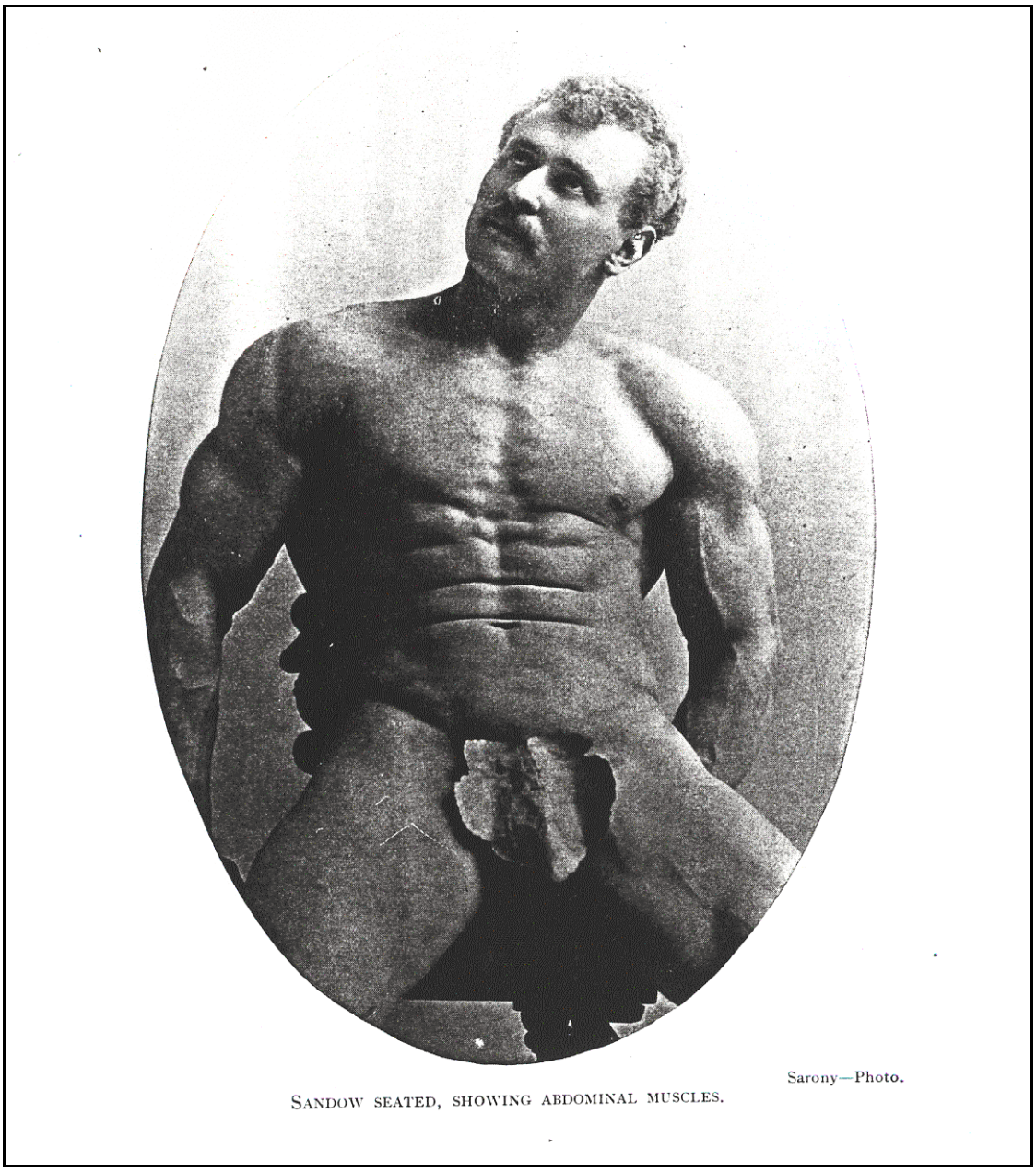

Fig. 4.11. "Sandow seated, showing abdominal muscles." *Sandow on Physical Training* (New York: J. Selwin Tait and Sons, 1894), n.p.

and added a section more than two hundred pages long titled "Great Men's Bodies." Beginning with Moses, Blaikie offers a brief essay about the bodies of

"great men" and how their physical gifts were linked to their artistic, political, military, intellectual, and spiritual gifts. Such disparate figures as David, Caesar, Mohammed, William the Conquerer, Luther, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Dickens, "Tom Brown of Rugby" (the fictional protagonist in *Tom Brown's School Days*), and Commodore Dewey are included among the ninety-four great men's bodies, although not every man's descriptive sketch includes an illustration. Blaikie concludes by saying "and does it not now become more clear how the *bodies* of these giants helped them in their life-work; *and how, without unusual vigor and lasting power, they could never have done what they did?* And if these physical resources were so potent a factor in *their* success, *are they not in any man's who much surpasses his fellows?*" [Emphasis in the original][25]

Other periodicals of a more erudite nature addressed the physical fitness debate as the inclusion of exercise and sports programs became an established component of public education and of university life. The American Physical Education Society founded the *American Physical Education Review* in 1896 where Sargent published "Strength Tests and the Strong Men of Harvard" in 1897.[26] Sargent gave students a variety of strength tests and accorded each person a composite score. This article includes tables, one of which shows the numbers of

[25] William Blaikie, *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So* 1879. (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1899), 463.

men reaching each score for the years 1880-1896, with more men reaching higher scores each year. *The Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, which Mott calls "the most distinguished of alumni quarterlies in the United States,"[27] published an address by Francis A. Walker, then president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1893 titled "College Athletics." Walker opens his speech by saying that no theme is of greater importance to higher education regardless of whether one is in favor of or against the growth of athletics, because "the rising passion for athletics has carried all before it." He is concerned to reach those who believe college athletics to be evil and that colleges are aiding in the "downfall of the whole traditional system of education." Walker offers historical precedent as an explanation for this attitude, recalling that before the Civil War, gymnastics was a negligible part of college life and athleticism was rare in the wider community. Students received admiration for intellectual achievements only, especially in the area of oratory. Walker attributes this attitude to poor physiology and to "transcendentalism and sentimentalism," which had created "contempt for physical prowess. … Brains and brawn were supposed to be developed in inverse ratio. … 'Mere bigness' was a favorite phrase of contempt." He cites also the influence of religion, which

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[26] D. A. Sargent, "Strength Tests and the Strong Men of Harvard," *American Physical Education Review* 2, no. 2 (June 1897): 108-119; 114.
[27] Mott, *History*, 74.

taught that the body was a prison or a storehouse for the soul, which found true expression only "when released from the clogs of the flesh." Now, all is changed, says Walker. The public is more concerned with how it lives, rather than how it will die. He notes the influence of Henry Ward Beecher and "Muscular Christianity," the Civil War, and the change in attitude toward political "mechanism" and "mere bigness." "Mass has taken its rightful place in public estimation. Power in a people has become a thing admired. It is felt that it is a glorious thing to have a giant's strength." Walker reviews the state of college athletics and concludes that college athletics may have a deeper significance than can be realized at present, as the enthusiasm for "the perfecting of the human body" may be related "to the growth of a feeling for art in this new land of ours." He draws a parallel between the ancient Greek passion for athletics and Greek art, which reached "the highest point of perfection ever attained" and claims that the greatest artists "have been men who revered the human form, made it their chief study, and found in it their greatest delight."[28]

Later that year, Theodore Roosevelt published "Value of an Athletic Training" in *Harper's Weekly*, a full-page essay which opens by saying that "one of the many strong points in General Francis Walker's admirable Harvard address was the stress he laid upon the immense benefit conferred by the

[28] Francis A. Walker, "College Athletics," *The Harvard Graduates Magazine* 2, no. 5 (Sept. 1893): 1-

practice of athletics…on college students…who do not stand in the first rank as champions."[29] To the general objection of injuries in team sports, Roosevelt makes it clear that he does not approve of brutality of any kind. That being said, the remainder of the essay is a defense of college sports and especially of football, which he believes to be under attack because "some persons, who are by nature timid, shrink from the exercise of manly and robust qualities if there is any chance of its being accompanied by physical pain." He argues that in a peaceful society there is the "danger of laying too little stress upon the more virile virtues," the qualities that are necessary for the making of statesmen, soldiers, pioneers, explorers, bridge builders, road makers, commonwealth builder. These are the "virtues for the lack of which, whether in an individual or a nation, no amount of refinement and learning, of gentleness and culture, can ever atone." The development of a boy, Roosevelt states, should tend toward the development of manliness, and this can be done through physical training. Outdoor sports are the best for this, and the sports that are "dear to a vigorous and manly nation are always those in which there is a certain slight element of risk."[30] Two years later, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., gave an address to Harvard's graduating class in which he combined the glories of sports, heroism,

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[29] Walker had been brevetted brigadier general in the Civil War when he was in his early twenties.

military service, and racial superiority, encouraging this group of elite men to risk their lives in order to preserve their dominance. In this Memorial Day speech, he told them

> Therefore I rejoice at every dangerous sport which I see pursued. The students at Heidelberg, with their sword-slashed faces, inspire me with a sincere respect. I gaze with delight upon our polo players. If once in a while in our rough riding a neck is broken, I regard it, not as a waste, but as a price well paid for the breeding of a race fit for headship and command.[31]

The injunction to see to one's physical fitness was an integral part of the ideology that national success, international power, and competitive imperialism (couched in terms of *noblesse oblige*) were contingent on and ordained by race, vigor, and virility. Even the irreproachable *Atlantic Monthly*, both high-minded and parochial since it began in 1857, received a gust of fresh air when in 1896 Walter Hines Page became assistant editor to Horace Scudder and brought with him new energy and new ideas. The magazine began to engage in muckraking journalism, published more features about politics, and ran an illustration of a war flag on the cover in 1898, rather a startling sight for anti-imperialist Bostonians.[32] Publication of "On Being Civilized Too Much" is an example of such an expansion in the magazine's persona. The author, Henry Childs

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[30] Theodore Roosevelt, "Value of an Athletic Training," *Harper's Weekly*, December 23, 1893, 1236.
[31] Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Soldier's Faith," *The Occasional Speeches of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.* ed. Mark DeWolfe Howe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 80.

Merwin, examines the expression "close to nature," and finds that it means much more than liking be away from cities, or knowing how to do manual labor, or being able to read the position of the sun or to orient oneself geographically by the moss on a tree trunk. The purpose of this text is to remind the reader that we have "certain natural impulses, or instincts," which are "apt to be dulled an weakened by civilization."[33] The key is to find the balance between feeling, which predominates in the savage, and intellect, which is the result of civilization and which stifles the instincts. Merwin says that the difference in the development of these traits is seen between individuals more than between ages [historical eras] and races, but that "every nation has type of its own," and society must strive toward a balance. He asserts that to be close to nature is to preserve the impulses of pugnacity, pity, and pride. Pugnacity protects property and pride, he says, while pity is ultimately stunted by civilization because when intellect overpowers feelings, we are likely to be calculating and reserved rather than take immediate action in a crisis. The instinct of pride is subordinated to too much analysis and discussion about great moral questions, whereas those who are not too civilized, who trust to instinct, will realize immediately what course of action to take and take it. Childs's ultimate goal, though, is to take

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[32] Mott, *History*, Vol. 2, 512.
[33] Henry Childs Merwin, "On Being Civilized Too Much," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1897, 838-846; 838.

contemporary literature and writers to task for being out of balance with the strong, good, pure instincts. Literary critics are even worse, for they do not respond to a work on the basis of emotion, but rather on intellectual grounds. The real message is not about feeling, intellect, or authentic response, however; it is about manliness and masculinity. He condemns the literature of his day, "composed largely by effeminate poets" and calls for anyone to compare the dedication in a recent book (which he does not name) to the preface to the *Endymion* and "he will see the difference between a man and a manikin."[34] Consider the manual laborer, he suggests, because "from his loins, and not from those of the dilettante, will spring the man of the future."[35]

In September 1898, just weeks after the end of the Spanish-American War, *The Independent* published another such message linking physicality with victory and righteousness. At this point, it could be argued that war had made clear the importance of physical health and strength, for it had been won on the basis of the nerve, muscle, and moral fiber of the soldiers. The war had proved the ultimate consequences of athletic training, and the author states, "In looking at our soldiers and sailors I was filled with admiration of their lithe and muscular

[34] Ibid., 846.
[35] Ibid.

forms and their show of virile health and intelligence."[36] The "interest in manly physical exercises" is to be credited with the preparation of "our young men for the important work they have recently done for their country."[37] The lesson we should take from this, he says, is that the colleges are justified in emphasizing athletics, that engaging in "great muscular exertion with a considerable element of danger" is beneficial, and that "the greatest danger that a long period of profound peace offers the nation is that of effeminate tendencies in young men."[38] In fact, in peacetime, manhood is needed even more than during war, because it is then that young men fall to temptation. Thompson closes with an explicit reference to the phallic body, the metaphor that once again reiterated the ultimate significance of white male supremacy and its closeness to divine being: "If man, indeed, is the one living thing that has a soul, he is the one living thing that most needs a perfect body in which to sheathe and protect that extraordinary gift of divinity."[39] This message and the one discussed immediately above from the *Atlantic* are not illustrated, but they hardly require representations of the metaphors used in the text: readers would have had instantaneous mental images of "effeminate poets," "the difference between a

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[36] Maurice Thompson, "Vigorous Men, a Vigorous Nation," *The Independent,* September 1, 1898, 609-611; 610.
[37] Ibid., 610.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 611.

man and a manikin," and "a perfect body" that would serve as a man's sheath for his divine soul.

The white male body and imperialism

Race was a fundamental aspect of sports coverage in all the periodicals in this study. *The Cosmopolitan, Harper's Weekly, Outing, Scribner's,* and the avalanche of books on the subject of fitness and strength were explicit in their messages about masculinity and race. In all of these publications, athleticism and muscular power are portrayed in terms of racial "whiteness"(meaning elitist in class and a claim to Anglo-Saxon ancestry), and the message is clear: their stories about physical superiority are, for them, necessarily about maleness and whiteness. The *Gazette*, however, was more progressive in its vision of the persons it considered among the physically superior. As we saw in the previous chapter, it featured a number of black boxers who were earning fame with their powerful bodies. In the next few years, the *Gazette* became more inclusive in its coverage and more transgressive of norms of masculinity even as it stood solidly behind white male dominance. For instance, in 1893, it ran illustrations of African American George Dixon defeating Solly Smith, a white man, in seven rounds for the featherweight championship at the Coney Island Athletic Club (fig. 4.12). "Thousands see the battle," the paper proclaimed. When Dixon lost his title the next year, it was not to a white man. He lost it to another African American

boxer, Walter Edgerton, known as " 'the Kentucky Rosebud' who "knocked down champion George Dixon, in Philadelphia" (fig. 4.13). However, through the end of the century, Fox did not run an image of a black athlete on the *Gazette*'s cover. The covers were reserved for other fare, including such inarguable statements of invincibility as the upper body of James Jeffries, the new "champion of the world" (fig. 4.14). Fox found it newsworthy and lucrative to enlarge the scope of his coverage, but for most of his readers, the effect may have been to reinforce racism and fear, thus bolstering rather than blurring distinctions made according to the system called "race." This was a period of rampant lynching of African American and of Mexican American men by white men; it is not likely that racial tension and the insecurity of white men would have been ameliorated by the presentation of black boxers and the victory of a black boxer over a white one. William Carrigan and Clive Webb report that 1,276 African Americans were lynched between 1881 and 1900, a figure that does not include Texas or Virginia.[40] They report as well that nearly 100 Mexicans were lynched during that time, although they are argue that number of lynchings of Mexican victims is grossly undercounted, partly because of ethnic

[40] William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, "Muerto por Unos Desconocidos (Killed by Persons Unknown)," *Beyond Black and White: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the U.S. South and Southwest* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 35-74; 40. The authors give 2,462 as the number of lynchings between 1881-1930, although they state earlier that "scholars have

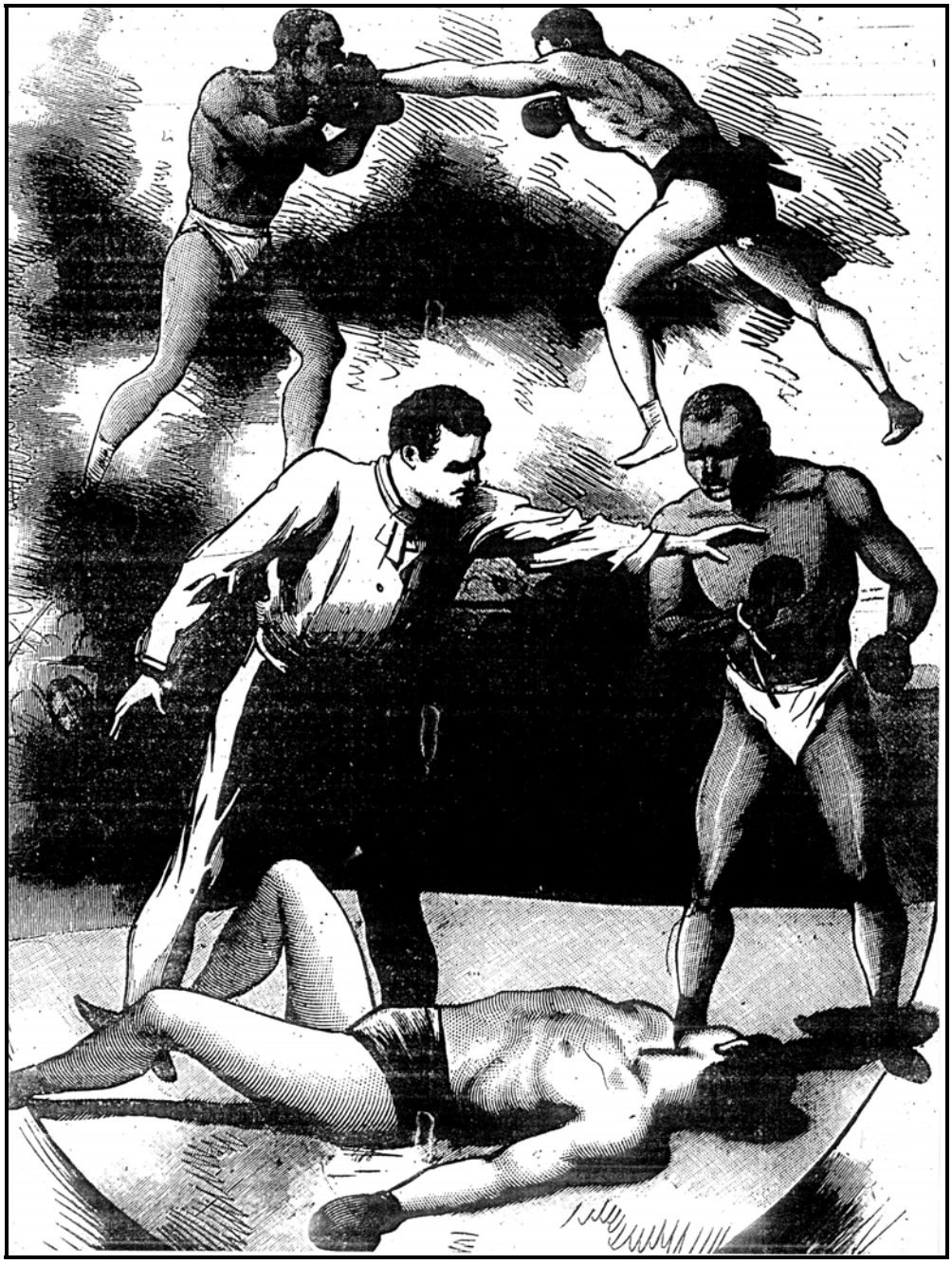

Fig. 4.12. "Dixon again the victor. The featherweight champion defeats Solly Smith in seven rounds in the Coney Island Athletic Club—thousands see the battle." The *National Police Gazette* sponsored this match. The purse was $9,000, with $8,000 going to Dixon and the rest to Smith. *National Police Gazette,* October 7, 1893, 9.

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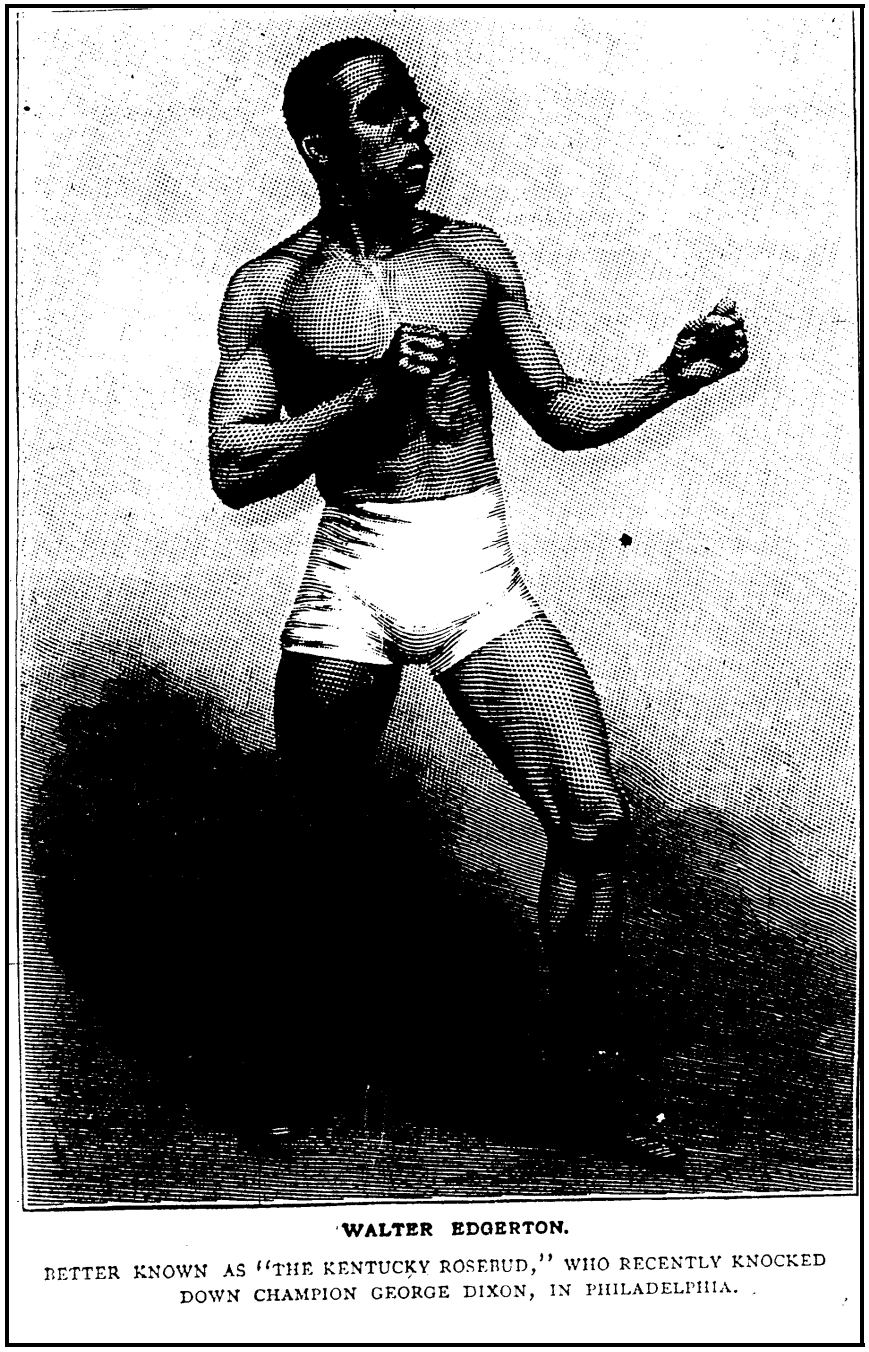
confirmed that between 1882 and 1930, at least 3,346 blacks were lynched in the United States." 36.



WALTER EDGERTON.

BETTER KNOWN AS "THE KENTUCKY ROSEBUD," WHO RECENTLY KNOCKED DOWN CHAMPION GEORGE DIXON, IN PHILADELPHIA.

Fig. 4.13. "Walter Edgerton. Better known as 'The Kentucky Rosebud,' who recently knocked down champion George Dixon, in Philadelphia." *National Police Gazette*, April 24, 1894, 12.

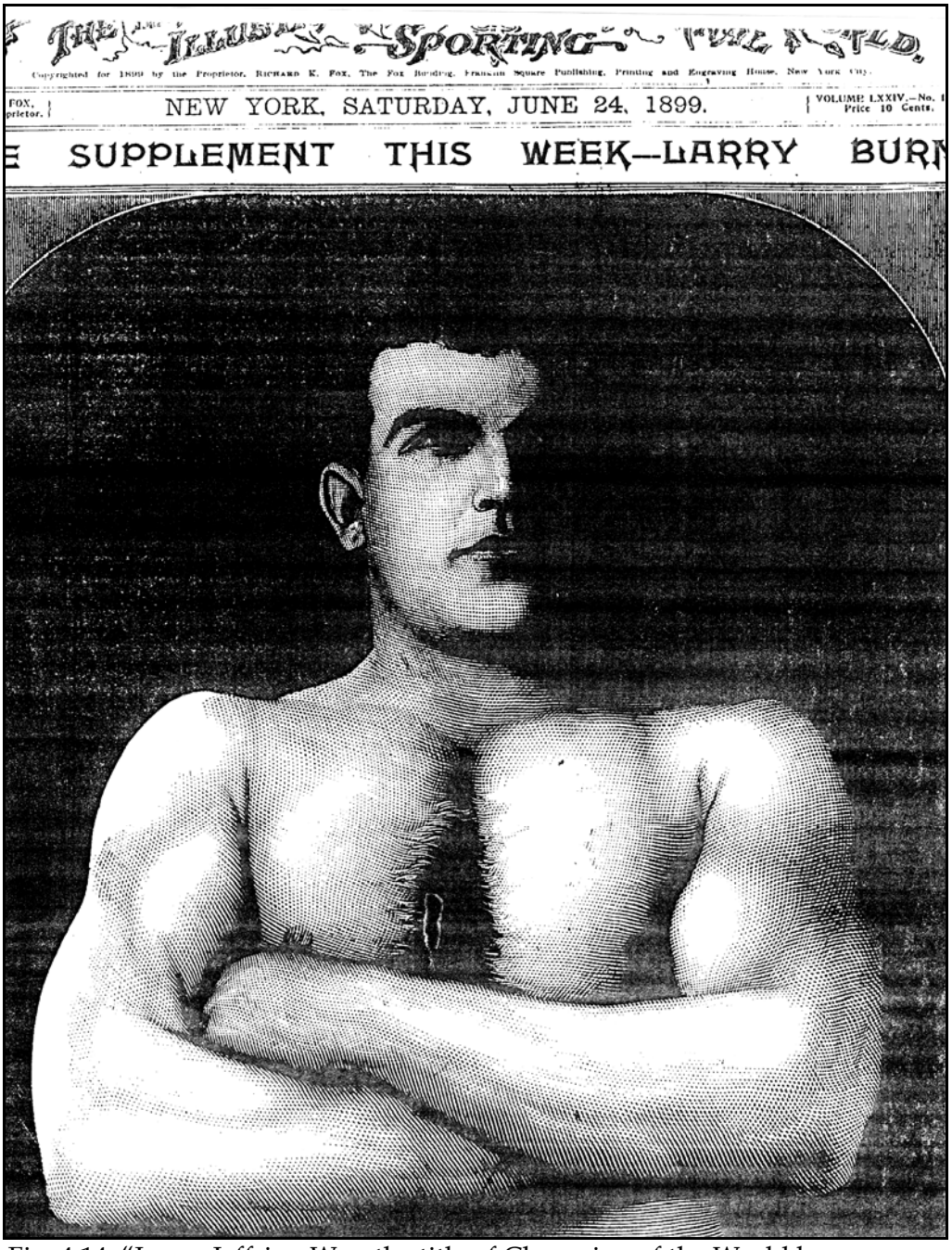


Fig. 4.14. "James Jeffries. Won the title of Champion of the World by defeating Bob Fitzsimmons." *National Police Gazette*, June 24, 1899, Cover.

misidentification and partly because data are even more incomplete than they are for lynchings of African Americans. Finally, the lynchings of Mexicans were more frequent *before* 1881; the authors report records of 350 such lynchings occurring between 1851 and 1880.[41] John Hope Franklin states that between 1885 and 1900 more than 2,500 lynchings occurred, "the great majority of which were of Negroes."[42] It was during this decade that Ida B. Wells was in England working to influence those in power there to hold the United States accountable for the practice and tolerance of lynching of African American men.

Race was incorporated into popular discourse in a multitude of ways. The physical anthropologists, medical doctors, fitness experts, historians, cultural theorists, members of the clergy, and scientists had all contributed to the construction of race. Few of them had been able to conceptualize race, or gender, or any kind of difference from themselves, outside of a paradigm of hierarchy. That is not surprising; gender and race are themselves paradigms of hierarchies, although not the only ones. The creation of hierarchies is their most fundamental cultural role. Dr. Samuel Morton had made a life's work of pouring small objects into hundreds of skulls in order to find evidence of correlation between intelligence, race, and skull capacity. Shortly after Morton's death, Josiah Clark

[41] Ibid., esp. 37-42.

Nott and George R. Gliddon's *Types of Mankind* (1854) had provided additional underpinning for racism transposed into "science." In the 1880s, E. D. Cope had combined age, gender, and race as ways to theorize about human development, so that chronological-, racial-, and gender-identified traits could be used as evidence of evolutionary stage. For example, if an Anglo-Saxon adult male demonstrated traits that were not Anglo-Saxon (or Nordic), adult, or male, it was because in that specific area of human nature, his development had been retarded and was not in character with his race/age/gender.[43] Reaching a much larger audience and more in the tradition of John Fiske's "Manifest Destiny" was Theodore Roosevelt's enthusiastically received *The Winning of the West*, which was based on the assumption of the superiority of the alleged Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic "race" and its inexorable, inevitable superior force that would cause it to cover and dominate the earth. Even the evangelical Josiah Strong felt compelled to address the subject of the body and athletics. He instructed his readers that we should revere the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost and so

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[42] Franklin quoted in William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster, and Trudier Harris, eds., *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 465.

[43] Cope, *Origin*, passim. His thesis that "we find a marked resemblance between the facts of structural progress in matter and the phenomena of intellectual and spiritual progress" (154) is substantiated throughout this collection of essays, but not by empirical evidence. These ideas, which Cope considered to be among his "general principles," were first published in 1870 in *Lippincott's Magazine* and thus reached a general audience. Cope states that these principles were developed before he did his "researches in the field of vertebrate paleontology, which have

should care for it so that we can get the largest possible amount of Christian service out of it. Therefore, athletics for men and for women are good so long as furnish the best supply of nervous energy for such service.[44]

The capacity for self-government was the linchpin of the argument for white male Protestant supremacy. Especially when ahistoricized, this special capacity was particularly adaptable to any number of situations. It served nicely as a theory of history, it explained world politics including domestic arrangements, it elucidated technological and artistic expressions, and it rationalized economic, geographic, and military expansion. It formed the matrix for legal, scientific and medical theory and research even though the sciences were directed toward "discovering" and "explaining" the "reasons" for white male dominance. The judiciary and the clergy supplied the evidence and the conclusions that the scientific method did not. Generally, discourse about gender and race nearly always came down to the question of the ability and capacity of the brain inside the body, and it was always the type of body that indicated what sort of brain, or mind, or proclivity, was likely inside. Gender and race are categories of hierarchy based on anatomy, although each has its own specifications and qualifiers, depending on the type of body under

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thrown the greatest possible light on the fact and method of evolution" (v). Not that it would have made any difference if he had done the research before developing the conclusions.

[44] Strong, *The Times and Young Men* (New York: Baker and Taylor Co., 1901), 126-130.

discussion. Even contemporary bodybuilding instructors addressed physical potential in terms of anthropological racism. In 1870 E. D. Cope published in his "Hypothesis of Evolution" the statement that "we all admit the existence of higher and lower races, the latter being those which we now find to present greater or less approximations to the apes" because of such "structural characters" as the nose and jaw, "the deficiency of the calf of the leg," and arms, which are "from one to two inches longer than those of the whites."[45] For those who had missed it in 1870, the essay was collected in *The Origin of the Fittest* in 1887. In 1889, Richard Proctor published *Strength: How to Get Strong and Keep Strong*, in which he stated that "there can be no doubt that the shapely calf indicates racial advance. The lower races of savage man are calf-less. . .. It is only in the highest civilised races, and in the best specimens of these races, that we find the shapely calf shown in Greek sculptures." And later, "Your average savage is apt to be lank and ill-shaped—especially about the calves; his body is as coarse in type as his face."[46] Sargent added his expertise to the "knowledge" about African American anatomy (apparently there was only one anatomical type) in his contribution to *The United States of America*, edited by Nathan Shaler, geology professor and dean of the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard. In writing of the physical traits of the U.S. population, Sargent classified groups by

[45] Cope, 147.

"different races." The African American has many of the "qualities pertaining to the highest type of the soldier," he states, the major defects being "ill-developed calves and bad feet, and a proneness to disease."[47] Even the *Gazette* adopted the guise of science as Dudley Allen Sargent had popularized it. In the 1890s, the tabloid ran ten-inch illustrations of such celebrated fighters as James Corbett, Robert Fitzsimmons, and Thomas Sharkey complete with anthropometric statistics (4.15) The sketches of Corbett and Fitzsimmons ran side by side on facing pages, with the headline "Two Modern Gladiators. A Physical Study of James Corbett and Fitzsimmons ANALYTICALLY COMPARED. Heads, Necks, Legs, Arms and Shoulders Intelligently Discussed. Muscle is a Factor in a Fight."[48] Hillel Schwartz remarks in his cultural history of body images and fantasies that in order to make sense of our obsession with body measurements and weight "the scientific urge to weigh and measure the human body must be hinged to a popular faith in that body as a reliable index to the self within."[49] The same can be said of the obsession with white male strength. The powerful white male body was seen as irrefutable proof of self-control, self-discipline,

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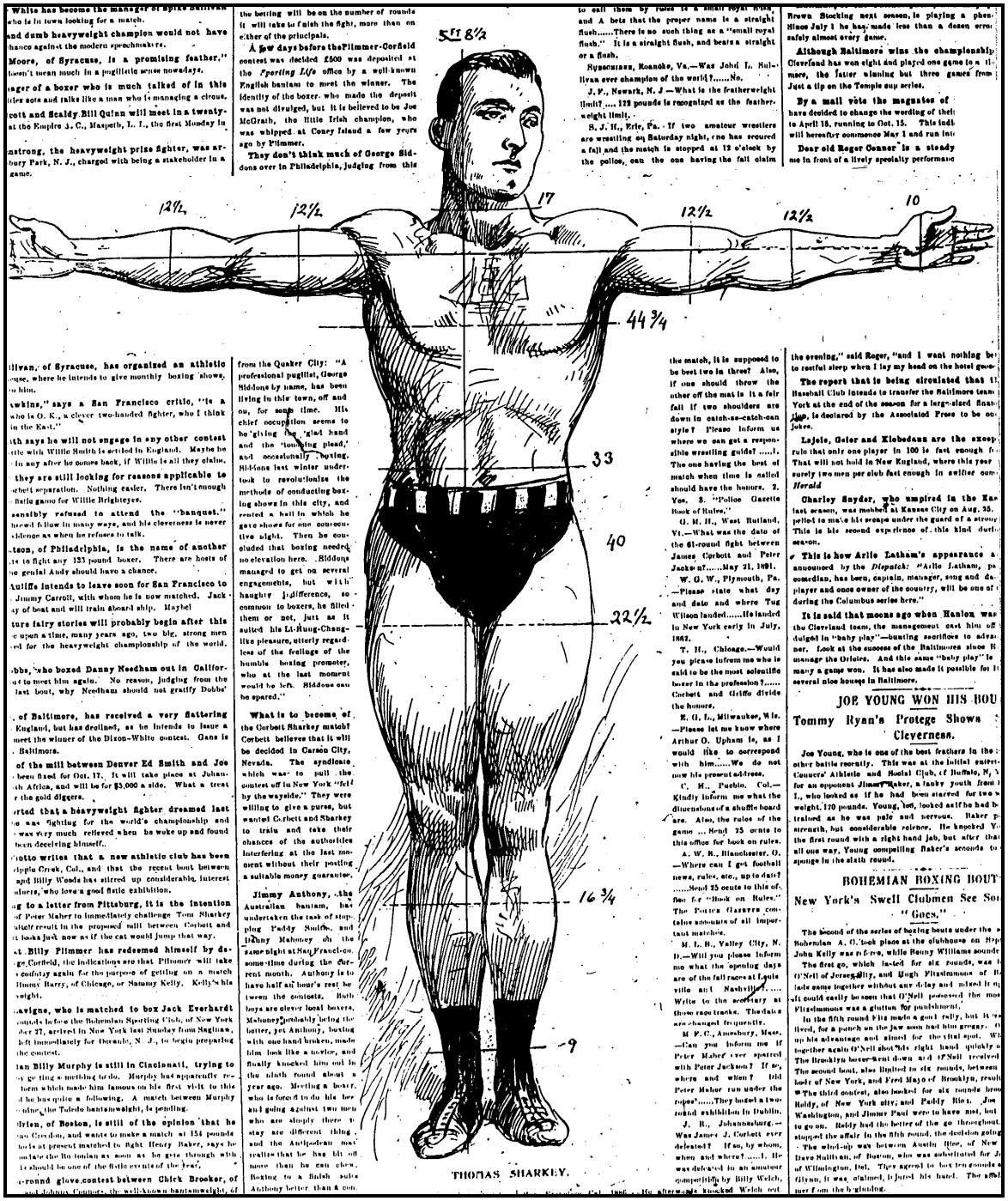
[46] Proctor, 78-79, 119.
[47] Dudley A. Sargent, "The Physical State of the American People," *The United States of America*, V. 3, ed. Nathan Shaler (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1894), 1122-1145; 1126.
[48] *Gazette,* November 16, 1895, 10-11. "Thomas Sharkey," *Gazette,* October 3, 1896, 11.
[49] Hillel Schwartz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies, and Fat* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 5.



THOMAS SHARKEY.

Fig. 4.15. Boxer "Thomas Sharkey." *National Police Gazette*, October 3, 1896, 11.

rationality, and will power. It was the starting block of the capacity for self-government and the symbol of the will to national power.[50]

When the mainstream media published stories about African peoples, no matter what the specific subject was, the publication reiterated the distinctions that created and ordered racial "levels." During England's takeover of much of Africa, for example, *Harper's* and other general-interest magazines helped to mold public opinion about the most recent conquests. Usually the story created a view that showed heroism on the part of the white soldiers, savagery on the part of the black soldiers, the moral rectitude of the white, the indolence and ferocity of the black. In 1894 when England was at war with the Matabele in South Africa over a mineral-rights concession that the Matabele king, Lobengula, had granted and which had been bought by the British, the *Cosmopolitcan* described the Matabele as being "a branch of the Zulus, and they have inherited much of the bravery and warlike spirit of their ancestors. The Matabele are a very savage and barbarous tribe, and they live only to increase their possessions by raids upon neighboring tribes."[51] The story says that Lobengula was a

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[50] See John S. Haller, Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971) and George Stocking, *American Social Scientists and Race Theory: 1890-1915* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960). For an analysis of this dynamic in the culture as it existed one hundred years later, see Suzanne Harper, "Subordinating Masculinities/Racializing Masculinities: Writing White Supremacist Discourse on Men's Bodies," *masculinities* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 1-20.

[51] Claire A. Orr, "England's Latest Conquest in Africa," *The Cosmopolitan*, May 1894, 35-45; 38 Lobengula had granted the concession of mineral rights only to C. D. Rudd of Cape Town in

ruthless ruler but not personally cruel, as "only stern and severe measures can be used with savages." Unlike the Matabele, the neighboring tribe, the Mashsonas, are not

> warlike, and consequently do not have many of those cruel and barbarous customs invariably found among such people. They are quite and peaceful as their physiognomies indicate. For many years, they have been subdued and harassed by their warlike neighbors, and this accounts in great degrees for that lack of manly bearing and that weakness of character so manifest among them. . .. Their features are mostly regular, without the deep nasal ridge, very thick lips, broad nose, and marked prognathy of the true negro. They are at present a very indolent people; but, as civilization advances in Mashonaland, they will undoubtedly learn to labor, and desire to work for the remuneration they will receive.[52]

When the Matabele and the Mashona came into conflict at Fort Victoria, the English stepped in and declared Lobengula an enemy of the Queen. The writer ends the article thus: "no civilized people could have taken possession of Mashonaland as the British company has done without being obliged to crush the power of the Matabele." To stay at home and condemn the British troops "is one thing; to live alongside of such savage people and actually put up with the

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1888. The British South Africa Company bought the concession a few months later "through the energy and ability of the Honorable C. J. Rhodes" (36) and gave to British settlers and police 3,000-acre farms. Lobengula had not ceded land, water, or timber rights. Nonetheless, the British government granted an imperial charter and "steps were taken to accomplish the occupation of Mashonaland (36)." Settlers were accompanied by "police" and brought with them machine-guns, rifles, and revolvers. The writer was one of the settlers.

[52] Ibid., 43.

real condition of affairs is quite another thing."[53] To this writer, only one course of action was available. Interestingly, the accompanying images belie the writer's text. For example, a young Matabele warrior, posed in profile as if about to throw his *assagai*, embodies composure, grace, and athleticism; his image does not fit the writer's description of the "most barbarous of people" (fig. 4.16). The contradiction and ambiguity created by the text and this image may have called into question the metaphor of the dominant white male, one of whose functions was to quell anxiety. This kind of resistant image, however, can function in culture to reinforce the dominant belief-system, as it creates a situation, in the reader's mind, in which it is imperative to reinvest faith in the metaphor being challenged, here, the white male body. In any case, *The Cosmopolitan* was already prepared with a resounding refutation of the power of black male bodies; in the next issue, it ran Sandow's article about himself with its eleven photographed images of him dressed in his fig leaf and gladiator sandals. The contrast between the images of Sandow and the Matabele warrior is grotesquely parodic of the white man. Moreover, not all images of African men were so dignified as that of the Matabele warrior. At the time that the writer of "England's Latest Conquest

[53] Ibid., 45.

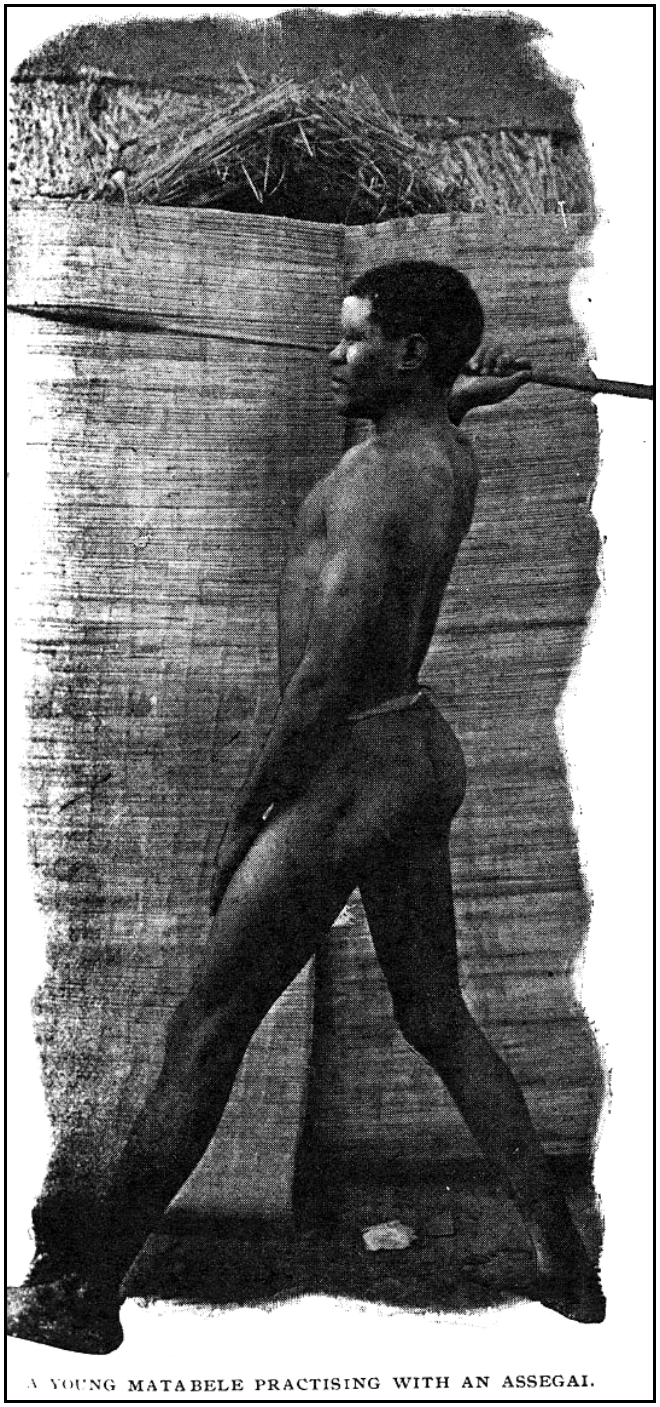

Fig. 4.16. "A young Matabele practising with an assegai." In "England's Latest Conquest in Africa," *Cosmopolitan*, May 1894, 43.

in Africa" was working on her story, the United States was celebrating the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas four hundred and one years earlier.

The World's Columbian Exposition remains one of the most searing portraits of life in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. The planners excluded African Americans from exhibiting and consigned white women to a building near the edge of the White City, just outside the Midway, which represented "the rest of the world" in distinction to the City, wherein was arrayed the splendid achievement of the white men. Of the countless documents of the fair, *Portrait Types of the Midway Plaisance,* a collection of photographs of "types of various nations" from the exposition, is itself a revealing portrait of the gender politics extant in the United States. The white men are German and are dressed in military regalia. The text beneath their images praises Germany and the men's appearances are addressed only to remark that these portraits are of a "more highly intellectual character" than some of the others and that the uniforms are "striking." The other men, a Sudanese and a Samoan, are described in their relation to colonial powers, and their appearances are labeled "strange" and "fantastic." The planners of the exposition established the Midway in zoo-like fashion, where tourists could observe various recreated environments meant to simulate the domestic context of inhabitants imported from a variety of nations, offering as entertainment the re-enactment of their daily lives, a sort of

international geographic and freak show. The commentary about "Zaroteffa, a Soudanese Woman," the wife of a warrior, begins with a few sentences about the "race." The text concludes by saying "African slavery in American had not, after all, been an unmixed evil, for … the advanced social condition of the American Africans over that of their barbarous countrymen is most encouraging and wonderful." "Bachara, Soudanese Sheik" is described as "tall, straight, with well knit arms and legs and with black kinky hair, profusely tallowed and peculiarly arranged." However, with Mr. E. Ruscheweyh, no mention whatsoever is made of his peculiar headgear or the arrangement of his hair (fig. 4.17). Rather, Germany is lauded as taking first rank among the national exhibitions represented at the exposition, and Ruscheweyh, the leader of the Germany infantry band selected for the fair, is described as being "a typical German soldier and a veteran of three great wars." Next we have Gustav Herold, the leader of the German Cavalry Band, wearing his "striking uniform." Later in the book we come upon "William (Samoan)," who is described as an "athletic specimen of manhood…His fantastic headgear and dress, ornamented with grasses and seashells, give an idea of the finery in which these people delight."

MR. E. RUSCHEWEYH. (Leader of the German Infantry Band.)

Fig. 4.18. "Mr. E. Ruscheweyh. (Leader of the German Infantry Band.) *Portrait Types of the Midway Plaisance* (St. Louis: N.D. Thompson Publishing, 1894).

No attempt is made to explicate the obvious parallels among the costumes of Ruscheweyh, Herold, and William. The analogies of stylization, ornamentation, and ceremonial gewgaws are not mentioned and perhaps, were not seen. William's headgear is patronizingly termed "fantastic," while silence is held about Ruscheweyh's very similar adornment.[54] The symbol of the powerful white male, here exaggerated via ornate military costumes, asserts dominance over the other images. The representations of the German men are coded to communicate masculinity as it was defined at that moment: white, resolute, prepared for battle, and the beneficiaries of an industrialized culture. The other figures are coded as feminine: draped in loose clothing or feathers and shells, adorned with necklaces and other ornaments, not recognizably (to the reader) dressed for battle, the other men are presented as subordinate to the white males.

Throughout the 1890s, the periodical press continued to represent white male supremacy through the question of others' ability to govern their societies, that is, to govern them in the way that the U.S. ordered and controlled itself. The question of the capacity for self-governance as the elite in the U.S. defined it—the answer to which was found in how tractable, cooperative, and obedient the "problem" peoples proved to be—was posed in terms of to what degree the peoples were similar to elite white Anglo-American males. If the population was

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[54] F. W. Putnam, ed. Oriental *and Occidental Northern and Southern Portrait Types of the Midway*

like those elite men, then it might be deemed ready for self-governance. If it were not enough like them, then the conclusion was always that the people could not be left on its own, awash in a dangerous world with no sense of what was best for itself. As many political leaders, business leaders, professors, and journalists argued that the U.S. had outgrown its continent, the image of vulnerable, unindustrialized cultures that needed protection from tyrannical European powers gained currency. Where those vulnerable peoples overseas were not dominated by tyrannical European powers, many argued, the U.S. had a moral obligation to prevent their subsumption into the English, French, German, Japanese, or Russian *corpus*. The political and psychological current was taking the U.S. into the deep sea both literally and metaphorically, and the nation's leaders couched this new foray as one that required armaments that could compete with the best of Europe's forces. The arguments for U.S. intervention overseas were made in terms of hegemonic cultural beliefs and logical argument (which can take a discussion just about anywhere as long as one statement makes plausible the one that follows it). However, these arguments were substantiated at the emotional level by images of bodies and the inferences that image-consumers in the United States could make on the basis of

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Plaisance (St. Louis, MO: N. D. Thompson Publishing, 1894).

those images, about themselves and about those who were represented in the images. Depending on the image, a consumer could make some level of inference of identity with the representation, or a level of inference of difference from it. Because it is much more difficult to be aware of this process in oneself as it is occurring, it is much more effective than an argument received via abstract concepts, whether in speech or in written text.

Harper's continued its coverage of "exotic" peoples, presented in much the same fashion as they had been presented at the Columbian Exposition. For instance, in 1895 *Harper's* ran a story titled "Recent cannibal uprising in the Fiji Islands," complete with groups assembled in front of large, fiber-covered structures as well as several "types," as individuals has been termed at the exposition. Such coverage was not limited to lands overseas, however. *Harper's* also published a story and illustration by Frederic Remington that portrayed a tall, powerfully built white man in the foreground, standing outdoors at night in the light of an open door, naked and bathing from a bowl of water on the ground (fig. 4.18). The white man is highlighted, his silhouette outlined as if he glows. His posture is ramrod straight, his legs held together, his right are extended straight in front of him as he washes the shoulder with his left hand. He displays to the Mexican men a full frontal view of his naked body. At a distance from the "godlike" figure are several small figures, Mexican men, who stand facing the

bather, their faces obscured by the dim light and by their sombreros. The body of the white man, presented as radically different from the other men's bodies, is a metaphor not only for superior physical power but also for national

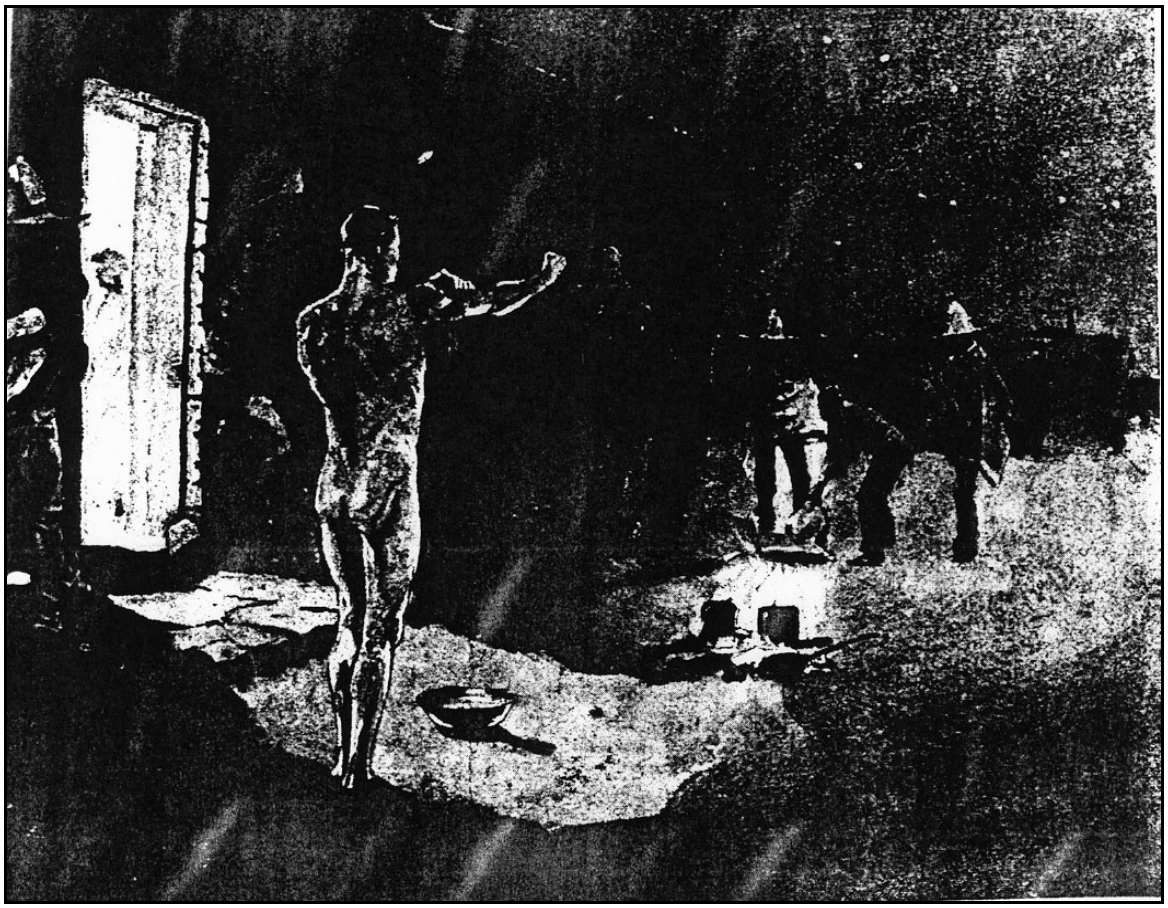

Fig. 4.18. "An early morning bath." In "Coaching in Chihuahua," by Frederic Remington, *Harper's Weekly*, April 13, 1895, 347.

dominance, order, self-control, discipline, and rationality (and civilization, Pears' Soap Company might add (seen in fig. 3.17), as he is the only one bathing).[55]

[55] Frederic Remington, "Coaching in Chihuahua," *Harper's Weekly*, April 13, 1895, 327.

Harper's ran a similar visual message six months later, when President Cleveland visited the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta. The image is split in half vertically, with a group of white men on the left and the African-American visitors in the foreground on the right. In a visual sleight of hand, the artist reverses the laws of perspective on a two-dimensional surface and has portrayed the white men, who are further back in the picture, with their heads higher than those of the black men even though all are standing at the same level. Behind all the figures is a sculpture on a pedestal of an African-American man caught at the moment after he has broken the chain on his wrist cuffs. In imitation of "classical" sculpture, he is naked but for a fig leaf. Above him hangs a banner that reads, "Our Motto Self Reliance." The men's bodies convey a drama of power relations: emancipation from slavery is juxtaposed with white male power and black male deference to that power as the elderly African American man in the lower right stands apart from and regards the president.[56] Another example of the representation of the male body that differed from the reigning definition of human superiority in the United States is that of a chief of the Oua people, of Tierra del Fuego. This photograph was taken during a Belgian expedition to the Antarctic. The feature opens with a halftone of the expedition crew sitting below deck, having Christmas dinner. On the

[56] The image is captioned, "The President in the Negro Building at the Cotton States and

facing page are several halftones of the location and the inhabitants, both human and penguin (fig. 4.19). The caption reads, "A Fuegan Chief in Full Costume." The man wears a fur draped from his right shoulder, and the sunlight illuminating his left side shows clearly that he wears nothing else.

Sculpting the Big Stick

During the 1880s and 1890s, manufacturers, politicians, the military, and the popular press in the United States sharpened their focus on such overseas nations as Hawaii, Guam, and Samoa and pinpointed discussion about the colonial conflict between Cuba and Spain. The press responded with coverage that contrasted images of U.S. military might with pictorial fantasies about the vulnerability and disorder of those defined as needing its protection and tutelage. Contemporary and past discourses about race, nationality, gender, superiority, and potential threats to its hegemonic position had rendered the image of white male Anglo-Saxon power a given in mainstream cultural myth. It had become intrinsic to the political order; its mechanisms were beyond awareness. Once that image had established itself as a cultural "truth" and as an imperative for national survival, it transferred easily to discourse about ensuring

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International Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia." *Harper's Weekly*, November 2, 1895, 1038.

Fig. 4.19. "A Fuegan chief in full costume." "*Harper's Weekly*, July 22, 1899, 715.

the muscularity of the U.S. armed forces. By this time, the representation of an elite white male prepared for conflict was prescriptive for masculine identity for white males. This is not to say that all, or even most, white males followed this prescription. However, the image had become the dominant reification of what being a "man" meant in mainstream discourse. The body was accepted as the means of dominance in the personal realm. Therefore, the metaphor of the strong white male could be extended effortlessly to the body—the means of dominance—of the nation as well. It was logical that if the physical strengthening of white men led to their endurance and position racially and politically, then the strengthening of the means of conflict on the largest scale—the armed forces—would have the same result for the nation. The long, steady diffusion of metaphors of white (defined now as the Anglo-Saxon "race") male superiority and of its antitheses, the images of bodies that bespoke vulnerability and inability to attain self-control, foresight, and regulated systems of life (women and the men classified as less civilized) allowed the term "colonialism" to be discussed in terms of establishing protectorates, ensuring national vitality, and regulating international relations. Discussants in favor of expanding the influence and power of the U.S. couched their arguments in the light of beneficence. Most of the pro-expansionist rhetoric made a case for protecting the colonized nation against predatory Western European nations, which constituted

a potential threat to the smaller territory as well as to American autonomy in the Western Hemisphere. In actuality, what was protected was the interest of the U.S. in the colonized territory, be it for economic resources and potential markets or for refueling and supply stations for the merchant marine as well as bases for the Navy.

The Monroe Doctrine, which had never been anything other than a unilateral proclamation of control, had been cloaked with the authority of the Ten Commandments. It therefore served nicely *de facto* as the *de jure* justification for increased vigilance with respect to being ever at-the-ready to halt European intrusions over the horizons of the Atlantic and the Pacific. It had nearly the cachet of an article of the Constitution. The motivation of the United States went beyond protectionism and self-defense, however, and extended to a desire to influence and to dominate, if necessary, European powers that sought outposts in the Western hemisphere. Additionally, the United States wanted to get into the overseas-empire game that Europe had been playing for centuries. Kristin Hoganson notes this bid for inclusion in global determination in *Fighting for American Manhood*, in which she refers to the time when "even tiny Belgium had overseas colonies." She notes that "a kind of empire envy underlay calls to join the rough and tumble ranks of the great powers, that strategic arguments

rationalized a desire to join the fray."[57] It was no longer enough merely to keep the horizons free of intruders. The U.S. had come into a new consciousness of itself, that of the lord of its own universe, however the nation decided to define that territory. In 1895, a long-standing boundary dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela about the border of British Guiana looked as if it might erupt into a conflict that would bring British troops to the Americas again. This was the situation that gave Secretary of State Richard Olney the opportunity to tell Britain that U.S. "fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition. Why? … It is because, in addition to all other grounds, its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers."[58] In other words, because it can. When Britain demurred, Cleveland all but declared war, saying that if, after the U.S. had determined the boundary, Britain persisted in maintaining control over Venezuelan territory, the U.S. would consider the action to be aggression against its own interests. This was declared in the name of "national self-respect and honor." The U.S. would tell Britain where its jurisdiction in the Americas lay and where it did not. The consequences? The stock market sagged, but Cleveland's popularity with the public soared. He was

[57] Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 10.
[58] Dewey, 306.

perceived as strong, patriotic, able to hold his own with major European powers, and willing to accept (manfully) his responsibility to protect the United States.[59]

This cohesion in the populace with respect to Cleveland did not, however, mean that all was well at home. The long cycle of economic depression, worsened by the international collapse in the early 90s, increasingly efficient industry, and another surge of immigration—approximately 600,000 new residents in 1892 alone, half of them from eastern and southern Europe—had brought anger and fear in the large labor population to the boil. Unemployment was high. Opposition between owners and workers led to labor strikes and violence. In 1892, miners' strikes in the west were crushed, as was the strike at the Homestead steel plant in Pennsylvania. Jacob S. Coxey led his army of unemployed men on a march from Ohio to Washington, D. C. to petition Congress for funding for road construction to create jobs. When Coxey arrived at the Capitol, he was arrested and spent three weeks in jail. Almost immediately, employees of the Pullman railroad-car company struck, joined several weeks later by the American Railway Union. In the Midwest and Pennsylvania, coal miners struck against wage cuts and in protest of the cheap labor supplied by new immigrants. Miners entrenched themselves along lines of ethnicity and country of origin (especially by and between those born in the U.S.

[59] Dewey, 305-310.

and those born elsewhere), thus battling not only the mine owners but also fellow workers. In the Southwest, relations among laborers were equally hostile, as Euroamericans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans and immigrants from Mexico struggled against each other and often among themselves for work, land, ownership, and civil rights as cotton production moved west and with it tenant farming and share-cropping.[60] Moreover, especially in the Pacific Coast states, white (here meaning not only self-styled Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic white) racial classifications and prejudice ensured that violence and exclusion continued against Chinese Americans, Mexican Americans, and immigrants from Mexico. Acute ethnic hostilities were continually being added to racial conflict (and often amounted to the same thing), hostilities that ultimately had a devastating effect on popular perception of the populations of Cuba and the Philippines. For the huge working-classes and middle-classes, these social torments augmented the potency of the metaphor of the superior (and therefore entitled) white male. The new immigrants were perceived as interlopers who had no right to be in the U.S. and were hated because their presence compromised the welfare of "native" white workers. For the middle-class, the recent immigrants brought in violence

[60] See Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*, especially chapters one and two for analysis of race and class constructions during the last two decades of the nineteenth century in Texas. Foley argues that categories and assumptions about race were permeable and that various populations moved in and out of categories depending on the economic and social imperatives of white ownership and lower-class white laborers.

and anarchy that disrupting the dream of predictability and upward movement. Thus it is not surprising that in 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed and in 1894, the Immigration Restriction league was formed to limit the number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe.

During this time, while the Columbian Exposition was in full swing in Chicago, Frederick Jackson Turner presented to the American Historical Association his essay titled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." In response to the announcement by the U.S. Census in 1890 that the western frontier had vanished, Turner analyzed the role of the frontier in the formation of "American character" and institutions, explaining U.S. history as the response of European immigrants to that frontier. Turner closed his address by saying "the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."[61] His theories proved to be a galvanizing force in the energy for expansionism, because his explanation for national development "proved" that the U.S. must expand, would expand, or deny the core of its identity. In 1889, Turner had reviewed favorably the first two volumes of Roosevelt's *The*

[61] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History*. 1920. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1947. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 38.

Winning of the West; when Turner's address was published in 1894, Roosevelt was equally enthusiastic.[62]

The census and Turner were correct, however, only if the frontier was imagined as being limited to the continental U.S.; for some, the frontier had not vanished. The entire Pacific Ocean and its islands and the Caribbean were the next steps in expansion. Such immigrants as the Dole family had occupied the islands of Hawai'i for decades, first as missionaries in the 1820s, then their descendants turning to business and using the islands' agricultural and human resources to create fortunes. In 1893, this group overthrew Hawai'i's Queen Liliuokalani, who had fought to keep Hawai'i an independent nation, and thus made ready for further westward expansion of U.S. domination. Sanford B. Dole was president under the provisional government that followed the end of the monarchy, and he requested annexation by the United States. Cleveland refused and order the reinstatement of Queen Liliuokalani, to which Dole replied with his own rendition of the Monroe Doctrine, summarily denying Cleveland's right to interfere. Dole's administration declared Hawai'i a republic in 1894, with Dole, not surprisingly, as its president. In 1898, with John Hay as Secretary of State and Theodore Roosevelt the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the McKinley

[62] Roosevelt, however, had attributed the formation of "American identity" to "racial" superiority, i.e., Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic ancestry. Turner argued that environment was the key to

administration annexed Hawai'i. The first governor of the U.S. Territory of Hawai'i was Sanford B. Dole. The forces for and against assimilation and amalgamation, fired by Dole's request for annexation, intensified throughout the decade.

During the nineties, Theodore Roosevelt made it his personal crusade to write articles that defined in exacting detail what it meant to be a true American. One month before Turner delivered his address to the AHA, Roosevelt sat in his study at Sagamore Hill on Long Island writing the preface to *The Wilderness Hunter.* In his essay about George Washington, Roosevelt describes him as a man who "was strongly drawn to those field sports which demand in their follower the exercise of the manly virtues—courage, endurance, physical address. As a young man, clad in the distinctive garb of the backwoodsman, the fringed and tasseled hunting shirt, he led the life of a frontier surveyor." Roosevelt finds the source of Washington's leadership in sports: "hardy sports of the field offer the best possible training for war . . . they helped to build that stern capacity for leadership in war" that resulted in the victory at Yorktown.[63]

The romanticized frontier life was next to Roosevelt's heart because it fostered what he saw as manliness, and manliness, fast becoming masculinity,

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the evolution of what he called the frontier and pioneer character traits of the American. See Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 410, 465-66.

[63] Theodore Roosevelt, *The Wilderness Hunter* (New York: The Review of Reviews, 1904), 281, 288.

was the core of "true Americanism." Roosevelt was fanatical in his attachment to constant demonstrations of masculinity as proof of good citizenship and genuine Americanism. In his article titled "The Monroe Doctrine," published in 1896, he excoriated those who sided with the British in the Venezuelan crisis, calling them timid and flabby, anemic and feeble.[64] In an address to the Naval War College in 1897 he employed George Washington's maxim—"to be prepared for war is the most effectual means to promote peace"—as a way to promote a vastly renovated Navy. Stating that "cowardice in a race, as in an individual, is an unpardonable sin," Roosevelt used the metaphor of the powerful and aggressive male body, arguing that the Navy must go beyond providing mere defense because

> it is not enough to parry a blow. The surest way to prevent its repetition is to return it. No master of the prize ring ever fought his way to supremacy by mere dexterity in avoiding punishment. He had to win by inflicting punishment.[65]

Because being a true American emphasized the characteristics of being morally pure, patriotic, energetic, and masculine, it became easier for the media to create an image of the United States as a white male international rescuer. In 1895, Cuban independence fighters were revitalized and accelerated their effort to overthrow Spain. The United States, eager to remove European control from the

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[64] Roosevelt, "The Monroe Doctrine," *American Ideals* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1926), 172, 175.

Americas, supported the rebels. Negotiations with Spain eventually resulted in a new Spanish ministry in Cuba, which published a decree of autonomy late in 1897. It was, however, too late for Cubans to act on it. The Cuban people had been all but destroyed in its fight against Spain, and the Spanish policy of *reconcentrado* had killed or made destitute and homeless hundreds of thousands of Cubans, placing suspected rebels in concentration camps. Resources for self-government were exhausted on every front. In January 1898, the State Department decided that the U.S. battleship *Maine* would call at Havana in order "to resume friendly naval visits at Cuban ports." Spain responded by stating that it would return the compliment by sending one of its own battleships to an American port. The *Maine* stayed in Havana Harbor for three weeks; on Feb. 15, 1898, the ship exploded. The Spanish *Vizcaya* arrived in New York three days later and spent a week "visiting."[66] On April 19, 1898, Congress declared war on Spain, and on May 1, Admiral Dewey obliterated the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay. That summer, Colonel Leonard Wood's and Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders led the charge up Kettle Hill, and the U.S. annexed Hawai'i and took over Puerto Rico and Guam. The conflict that had been the Spanish-American War became the Philippine-American War in 1899, a "pacification" that Filipinos fought until their president, Emilio Aguinaldo, was captured in 1901. (U.S. pacification,

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[65] Ibid., "Washington's Forgotten Maxim," *American Ideals*, 184, 194.

occupation, and control did not end until the Philippines were accorded full independence in 1946.) In the same year, John Hay sent his Open Door notes around the world to ensure access to China. In 1900, the U.S. made Hawaii a territory and sent General Leonard Wood to Cuba to run the U.S. military government there. Capping off the decade, and the century, was the Boxer Rebellion, the result of commercial exploitation and political domination in China by Germany, Russia, England, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

All of these events presented challenges to the hegemony of the white upper-middle-class male. Whether the challenge was international or domestic, having to do with ethnicity, gender, or race, forces were at work to alter the traditional power structure. In this light, the fixation with the display of the strong white male and his powers of procreation and domination becomes transparent. As with all media images, the images in the illustrated press expressed and created cultural realities. Each time a magazine or newspaper published an image of a white male bodybuilder or its corroborating "other" bodies, the reality of that social imperative--that white men were supreme--bit more deeply into the male subject and into the cultural psyche, to paraphrase Norman Bryson.[67] The more often it appeared, the more unremarkable it

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[66] John Holladay Latane, *America as a World Power, 1897-1907.* : Harper and Brothers, 1907, 13-26.
[67] Norman Bryson, "Géricault and 'Masculinity'," in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England / Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 244.

became; hence the image acquired increasing credibility as the image of command. The more ubiquitous the image of the strong Anglo-Saxon male, the more invisible it became as an object of critical analysis. It simply was. Images sidestep verbal rhetoric, which is meaningful only to those who are literate and have the time to read. They make their statement in an instant to those who know the cultural signs. Images create desire and identification and belief in a way that words cannot; in a sense, the illustrated press had served as an advertisement for the male body as a symbol of ruling power. Forming a crosscurrent with that message were the images of female strength trainers and boxers, male African-American boxers and Asian wrestlers, and the advertising pages hawking sexual restoratives, all of which appeared in the *Gazette*. The crosscurrents, however, worked not so much to undermine the dominant message of white male supremacy as they provided contrast, the negative space, to the images of massive bodies of the white men. Cultural myth held that those other bodies could not truly compete; they could only try to imitate the white male body. Even the sexual restorative ads, while addressing anxieties about performance and virility, offered hope and reassurances that any level of inability could be rectified.

Imagery of armor

The muscular white male and formidable military armaments are predicated on the image and function of armor. The notions of knighthood, chivalry, noblesse oblige, and masculinity in the form of invincibility and an elevated morality passed through generations of Western European culture and permeated the fantasies of the dominant culture in the United States. The concepts of honor and moral right found outlets in the duel, in philanthropy, in a nostalgic ideal of chivalry, and in the metaphorical slaying of various dragons that threatened the "natural order" of civilization. The dragons came in the forms of women's challenges to the status quo, debates within the disciplines of anthropology and biology, the incipient political changes forecast by Reconstruction, and continuing mass immigrations from Ireland, Southern and Central Europe, and Russia. As society began to feel pressures from these various groups, those who would have to change their position most in order to accommodate those pressures--the elite white male--resisted. One of the ways in which resistance became visible was in the conceptual mergence of the preservation of the world with the restoration of the white male body, which would ensure not only continued white male dominance in one-on-one altercations but in international war as well. The image of strength became a visual paradigm where the borders between the white male and all others were made palpable. The acquisition of a hard, muscular body provided a way for

members of the dominant group to "adapt to new circumstances without breaking down the social-structural arrangements that actually give them their power."[68] The visual rhetoric of the armored white male body was easily transposed onto national identity and military power.

The transformation in the representation of armor from something external to something built under the skin did not change what armor meant or its interpretation by the viewer. As Joseph Kestner, George Mosse, R.W. Connell and others have pointed out, masculinity has historically been associated with armor, whether of metal or of flesh, and the transmission of this association has most effectively been accomplished with images, including the image of a living, breathing body.[69] Kestner uses the iconography of British Victorian painting to illustrate the cultural reinstatement of a genteel but heroic masculinity which became valorized in response to a manhood characterized by virtue, peaceableness, and sexual negation. Chivalric iconography in the nineteenth century employed armor to mark maleness and dominance, "which transforms

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[68]Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee, "Hard and Heavy: Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," in *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change*, edited by Michael Kaufman. (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 164.

[69]Joseph A. Kestner, "The Representation of Armour and the Construction of Masculinity in Victorian Painting," *Nineteenth Century Studies* 7 (1993): 1-28; George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); R.W. Connell, "Men's Bodies," in *Which Way is Up? Essays on Sex, Class, and Culture* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), Ch. 2; Connell, "Men's Bodies," in *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), Ch. 2; and Connell, "The Body and Social Practice" and "Sexual Character," in *Gender and*

the male body into the supreme signifier of masculinity, the permanent erection,"[70] or what is termed "the phallic body." He states that for the Greeks, it was the athletic, nude male that represented nobility, manliness, and virtue, while for the Victorians, it was the exoskeletal, armored male. Both England and the United States expressed their interest in armored males by creating a market for popular culture periodicals that printed images of the naked, or nearly naked, extraordinarily muscular male. Michael Anton Budd writes in *The Sculpture Machine* that the deliberately built body is "exhibited as totally taut; both literally statuesque and yet always capable of exercising force and the power at the appropriate climactic moment…. The language of the erect pose in which muscles were flexed to their best advantage was one with which men were conversant."[71]

In the U.S, as we have seen, the image of the white male body had exerted an increasingly iconic effect on public imagination. The working class male body, enhanced by attention to symmetrical development, had become the elite male body, transformed by the discourse of masculine physical power. Armor now was something a man built up from his own flesh, most visible when the man

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Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), Chs. 4 and 8.

[70]Kestner, 3.

[71] Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and London: Macmillan, 1997), 63.

was unclothed. Thus one of the signs of a subordinate class--being less clothed than others and being placed for display--became also a sign of physical dominance, brute force, and visual appeal. Even if a man's elevated class-position did not permit him to display his body, he was nonetheless not exempted from the duty of being muscular. The illustrations were meant to impress, but also possibly to create longing, identification, and desire, in the same way that body builders are displayed in muscle magazines today. Roosevelt's description of Captain Allyn Capron, who was one of the officers in the Rough Riders, provides an illuminating example.

> I think he was the ideal of what an American regular Army officer should be. …in body and mind alike he was fitted to play his part to perfection. Tall and lithe, a remarkable boxer and walker, a first-class rider and shot, with yellow hair and piercing blue eyes, he looked like what he was, the archetype of the fighting man.[72]

This kind of description was not new; *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and even *The New England Magazine* had been publishing stories and photographs of elite athlete/warriors for years. What Roosevelt's description connotes, though, is not only his own attraction to Capron. It expresses also the pervasive cultural adoration for visual evidence of strength and invincibility in men and in military machinery, in men *as* military machinery. Roosevelt's descriptions of Capron and Sergeant Hamilton

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[72] Theodore Roosevelt, "The Rough Riders," *Scribner's Magazine*, January 1899, 12.

Fish in a subsequent article are even more erotic, the emotional import enhanced by tragedy. He describes an evening when he had "strolled over to Captain Capron's troop," where a few men were standing around the fire, Capron and Fish among them.

> As we stood around the flickering blaze that night I caught myself admiring the splendid bodily vigor of Capron and Fish—the captain and the sergeant. Their frames seemed of steel, to withstand all fatigue; they were flushed with health; in their eyes shone high resolve and fiery desire. Two finer types of the fighting man, two better representatives of the American soldier, there were not in the whole arm. ...Within twelve hours they both were dead.[73]

The discourse of the strong ruling class, an indomitable United States, was popularly endorsed, but illustration of the corporeality of this masculinity was troublesome. After graduation, the athletes went into the professions, politics, or business, and were no longer involved in competitive athletics that involve such attire as track shorts or boxing trunks. In the 1880s, expansionist energies had found resonance in the dream of a renovated navy, one that would meet the new standards for masculine identity and its affirmation by others. The metaphor of the muscular Anglo-Saxon male retained its valence, but if that self-accorded identity were to be perceived as masculine by other powerful nations, then the U.S. had to develop visual presentation of its military muscle. In order to be credible as a masculine nation, there would have to be visible proof of being able

[73] Ibid., March 1899, 263.

to enact that identity. After the popular and legislative support in the 1880s of a modernized and competitive navy, the 1890s saw an explosion of images of huge, tough battleships and cruisers with guns that became bigger every year. Ships and guns commanded space in nearly every issue is some periodicals s during this decade, with *Harper's Weekly* being one whose overwhelming coverage indicates an intense interest in images of one-upmanship. Illustrations and photographs of enormous ships and guns were punctuated by images of Filipinos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Samoans, Chinese, and other newsworthy "ethnic" groups.[74] Just as the white male body had come into its own as the signifier of patriarchal control, so now did guns and ships stand in for class, racial, sexual, and now national dominance as well. Athletics, too, commanded more space inside the magazine as the decade progressed. Approximately twenty percent of *Harper's* covers during this period consisted of images of United States military power. Occasionally, an illustration of a European incursion into Africa, a photograph of the effects on Cubans of *reconcentrado* or an image of the U.S. Army's continued battering of Native Americans in the far

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[74] During the very early 1890s, *Harper's* published many covers of a sentimental nature and of the upper-classes and their social world. Occasionally the cover featured a "genre" scene that showed how the working class lived. All of these images can be interpreted as anthropological studies as well as representations of ethnicity. Surely "Lake George Races," "Saratoga Springs," "At Madison Square Garden," or "Salvation Army Wedding" are as anthropologically revealing as images of Puerto Ricans in the *mercado* or a Filipino family gathered on a riverbank. *Harper's* readers were most likely not seeing their native cultures in that light, however. Covers that

northwest would appear on a *Harper's* cover. The percentage of military covers is misleading, though, as an indicator of the impress that such images made on *Harper's* readers, for the periodical was filled with like representations. In addition, *Harper's Weekly* was a large magazine. It measured eleven inches by sixteen inches, and the cover images were about nine by twelve inches. Inside the book the impact of illustrations and photographs was even greater, for *Harper's* often ran images that were full-page and thus were larger than the cover image, taking up nearly the entire page. In addition, *Harper's* ran double-spreads of scenes that were deemed important enough, making the image twenty inches by about fourteen inches. "Supplements," four- or eight-page entities within the magazine and the having the same dimensions were often included with the magazine. (In 1899, an eight-page supplement was devoted to Admiral Dewey alone. Seven of its pages were photographs.[75]) Moreover, the editors occasionally called for a foldout in the event that twenty inches was not wide enough for an illustration. Thus, in October 1892, the editors ran a forty-three inch foldout panorama of "The New York Columbian Celebration—The Naval Review," an aerial view of New York Harbor crowded with what seemed to be

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reiterated signs of masculinity were plentiful, nonetheless, and increased in frequency and dominance-based imagery during the decade.

[75] *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 7, 1899. Supplement.

every ship the Navy possessed.[76] A similar space was given in 1897 to an illustration of the United States Navy, approximately eighty ships portrayed, and on the back a detailed key to the entire drawing with complete statistics on each ship.[77]

The Columbian Exposition provided the perfect outlet for the dispersal and consumption of military images. Along with the quest for the biggest ships had emerged a fascination with military uniforms, and the U.S. Army determined to keep up with the fashions of European armies. Officers were arrayed in impressively decorated uniforms and grandiose helmets, as in the *Harper's* illustration of the Chicago Hussars escorting the presidential party at the opening of the exposition (fig. 4.20). The inspiration for such showy clothing appeared the next week in a feature titled "Characteristic Sketches of the German Army." The visual signifiers of pomp, the tight uniforms bristling with buttons, medals, and epaulettes, belted waists, the purely ornamental swords, the tall, gleaming boots, and the phallic helmets found ready consumers in the U.S. Army. *Harper's* stories about the Army glorified military drill, athletic contests, and especially theatrical feats of horseback riding. It was the Navy, however, that had captivated the public's heart. Periodicals for children and adults, advertising, adventure books, war memorials, flotilla displays, and naval

[76] Ibid., Oct. 22, 1892. Supplement.

reviews were popular For the World Columbian Exposition, the navy built a full-scale model of the U.S.S. *Illinois*, 348-feet long and complete with working guns which officers fired for the entertainment of the crowd.[78] Beginning in 1897, the illustrations of battle ships looked more menacing than they had in the past. In 1898, *Harper's* naval covers practically glowered. The battle ships were portrayed as implacable behemoths, spewing smoke and bristling with guns, the cruisers sharp and sleek and riding high in the water (4.21, 4.22). In his 1897 address to the Naval War College, Roosevelt had emphasized the need for a large navy with "great armored battle-ships with their heavy guns and shot-proof vitals." With such armaments, the nation could live up to the Monroe Doctrine and assert its interests "in the teeth of the formidable Old World powers" by being ready "to meet them on the seas, where the battle for supremacy must be fought."[79] Even *Scribner's Magazine,* which was known for general articles with more "timeless" interest (during the Spanish-American War it declined to address that conflict and instead published a six-month series on the American Revolution), ran a number of features about the Navy and the Merchant Marine during the 1890s.

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[77] Ibid., June 19, 1897.
[78] Shulman, 55.
[79] Roosevelt, "Washington's Maxim," 194-95.

Fig. 4.20. "The Chicago Hussars. Escort to the Presidential Party at the Opening of the Columbian Exposition." *Harper's Weekly*, May 13, 1893, 449

Histories of the Spanish-American War that were published immediately afterward are an excellent view into the grandiosity of the contemporary hegemonic masculinity and of the national identity that were emerging in the United States at that time. The masculinizing of identity and the unwillingness

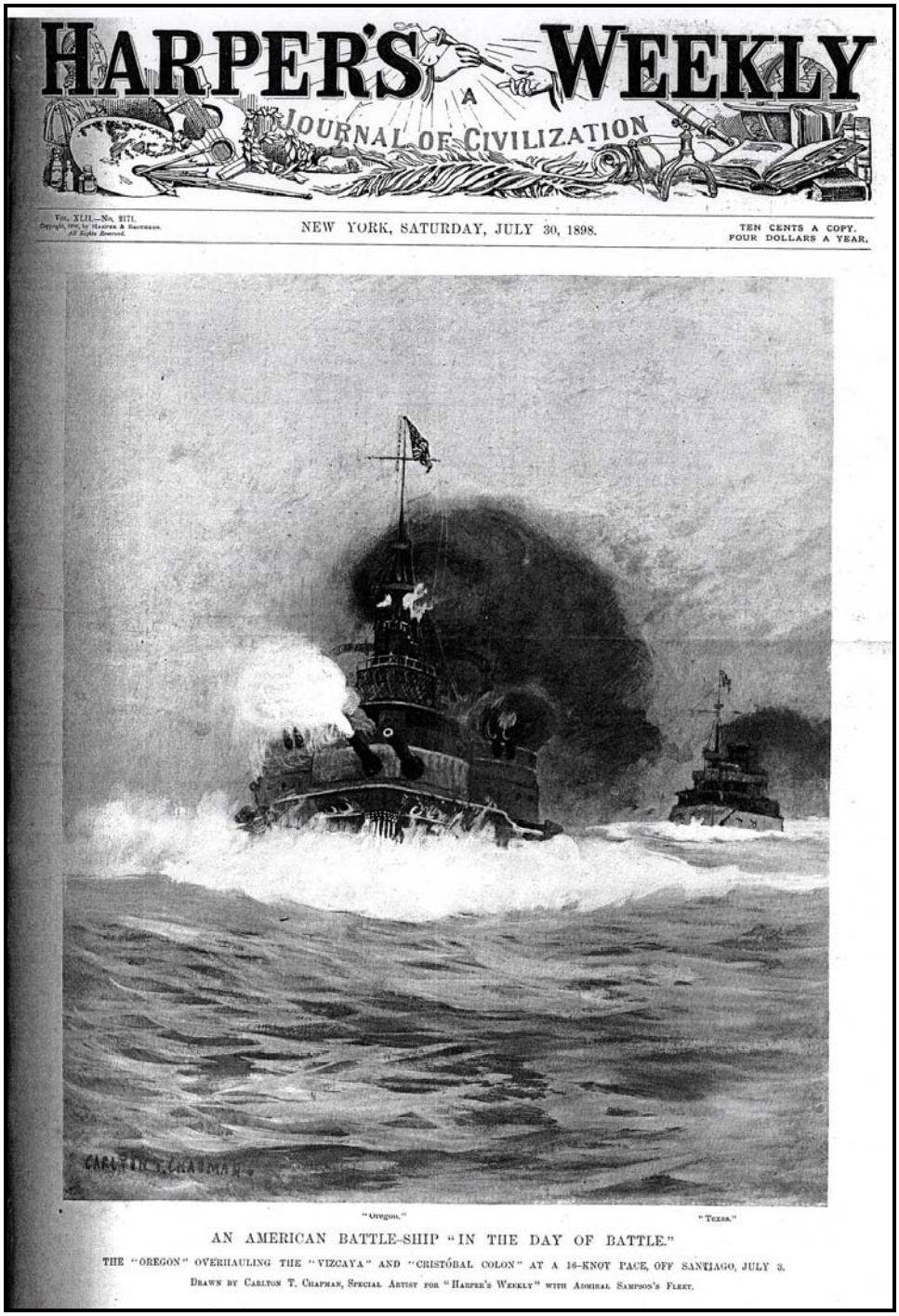

Fig. 4.21. "An American battle-ship 'in the day of battle.' The *Oregon* overhauling the *Vizcaya* and *Cristóbal Colon* at a 16-knot pace, off Santiago, July 3." *Harper's Weekly*, July 30, 1898.

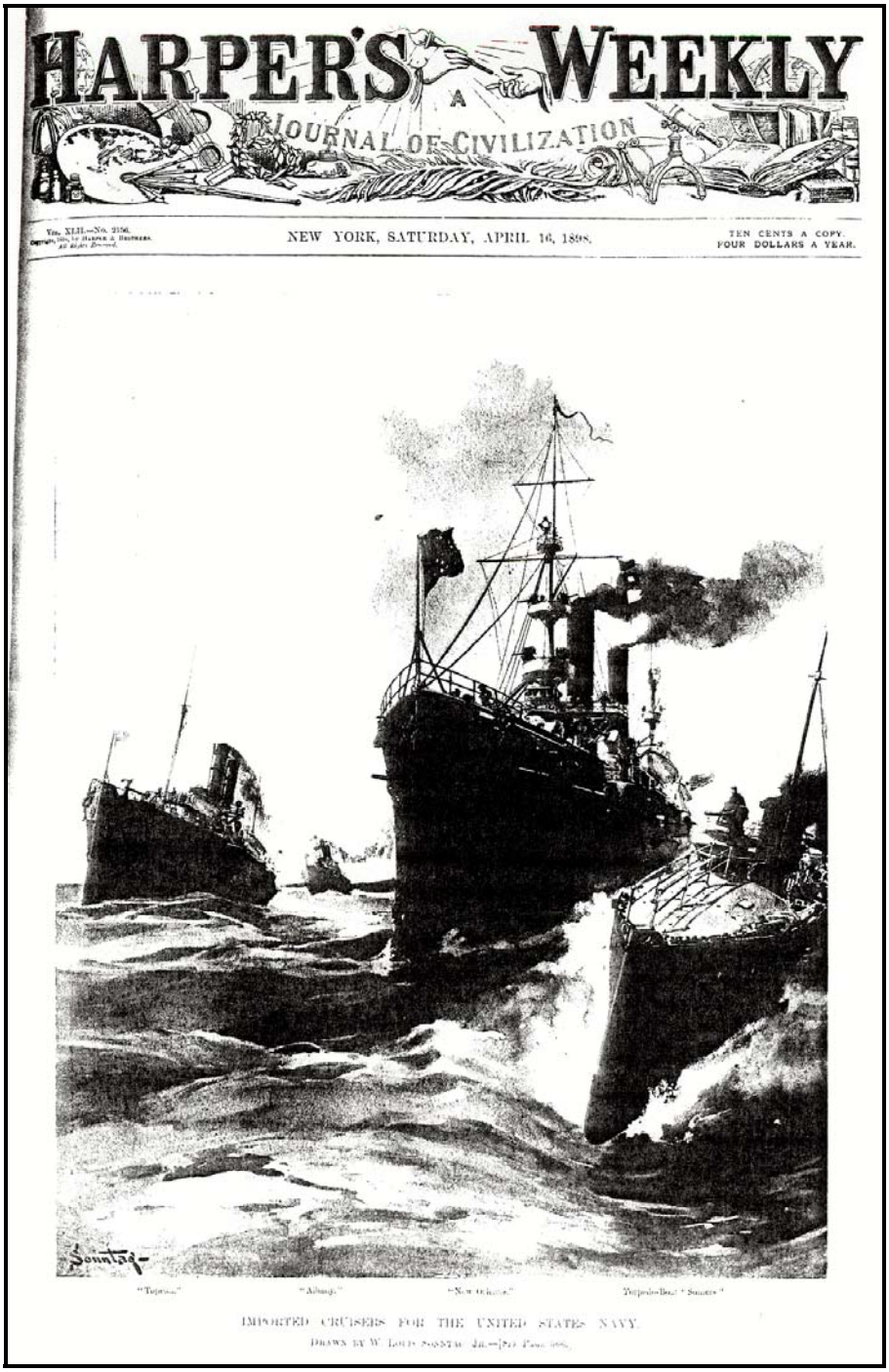

Fig. 4.22. "Imported cruisers for the United States Navy." From left: the *Topeka*, the *Albany*, the *New Orleans*, and the torpedo boat *Somers*. *Harper's Weekly*, April 16, 1898, cover.

to maintain a boundary on its influence abroad determined the foreign policies and the relationships of the United States with other nations and peoples. As the images we have viewed showed their contemporary audiences, intrinsic to being a man, manliness, and masculinity was the capacity to call on a warrior's mentality and a warrior's body. If the fight was too big for a powerful human body, then a collective body had better be ready to stand in for the nation. We have seen some of the rhetoric, both verbal and visual, that set the standard for masculinity in the 1890s. In 1898, James Rankin Young and J. Hampton Moore published *History of our War with Spain*, which is remarkable for three qualities: obsession with statistics and measurements, braggadocio, and continual references to penetration. Chapter ten, "Big Guns and Coast Defenses," is particularly apropos. In a series of sexual metaphors that are so obvious as to seem intentional but most probably were not, the chapter is divided into sections with such subheads as "Coast-works may be Impregnable," "Guns that Fire and Disappear," "Projectiles of Great Crushing Power," "Pushing Work Night and Day," "Can Smash any Armor," and "Thickest Armor Plate can be Penetrated," "Can be Aimed Only by Machinery" (because of the great length of the guns, some of them being forty feet long), and "Fired Ten Times in Seventeen Seconds."[80] The anatomical imperative is inescapable. While these titles seem

[80] James Rankin Young with J. Hampton Moore, *History of our War with Spain* (Chicago:

quaint today, they are indicative of the seriousness of the determination to create a military force and a nation that was unquestionably and radically masculine, that would secure the nation's borders and be ready to transgress those of others (figs. 4.23, 4.24).

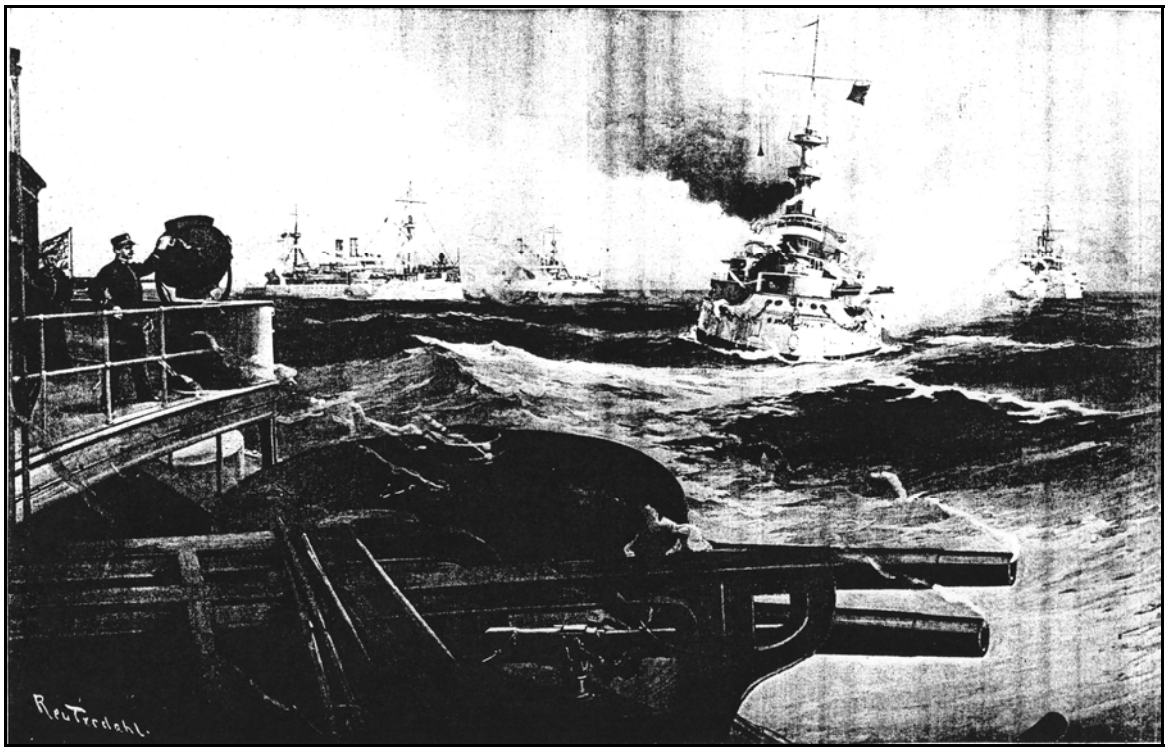

Fig. 4.23. "Winter Manœuvres of the North Atlantic fleet in the Gulf of Florida—great-gun target-practice." Left to right: the superstructure of the *Massachusetts*, the *Maine*, the *New York* (the flagship), the *Indiana*, and the *Iowa.* *Harper's Weekly*, January 29, 1898, 104.

Providence Publishing Co., 1898), 151-164. See also Young and Moore, *Reminiscences and Thrilling Stories of the War by Returned Heroes* (Chicago: Providence Publishing Co., 1899).

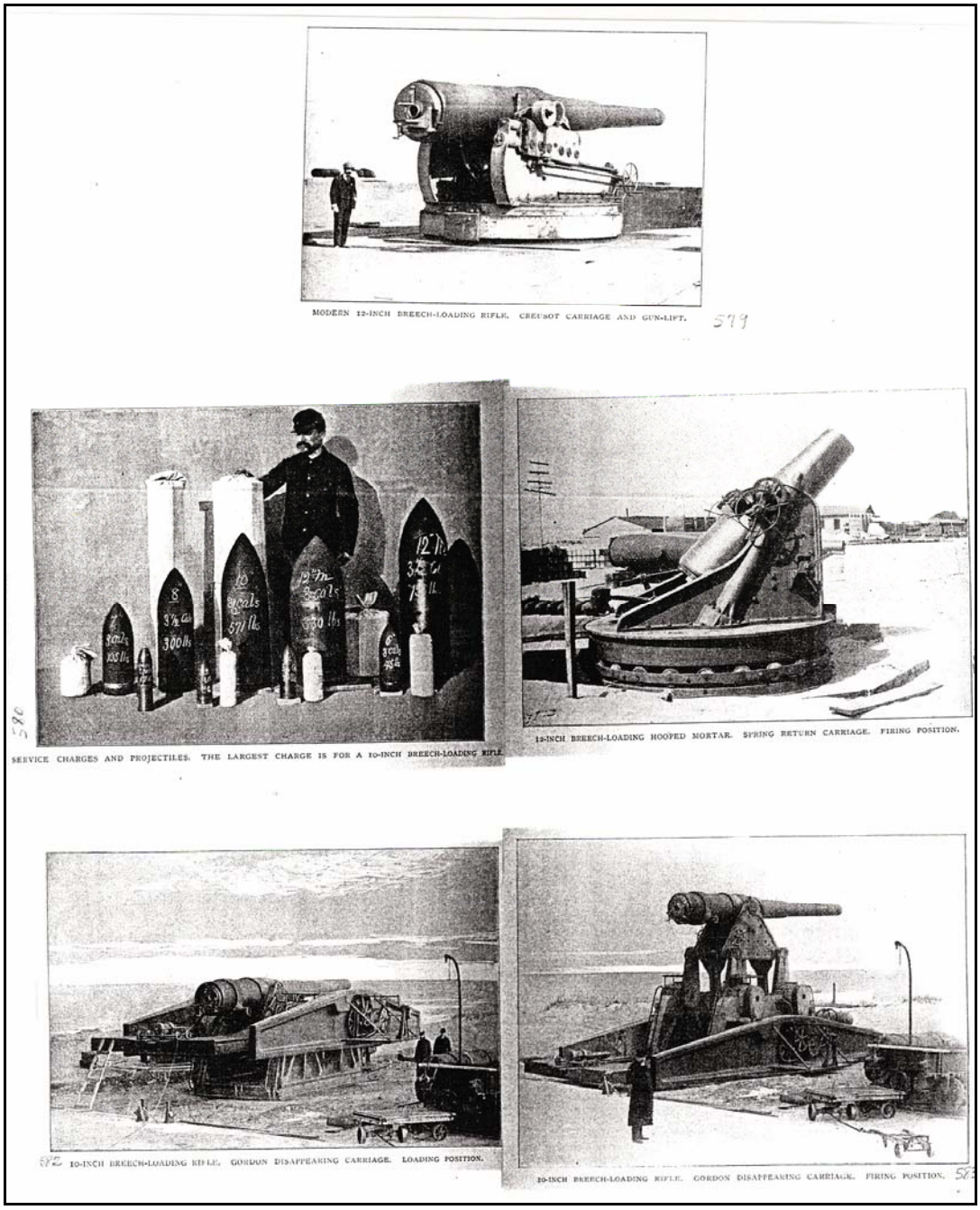

Fig. 4.24. Top, "Modern 12-inch breech-loading rifle. Creusot carriage and gun-life." Middle left: "Service charges and projectiles. The largest charge is for a 10-inch breech-loading rifle." Middle right: "12-inch breech-loading hooped mortar. Spring return carriage. Firing position." Bottom left: "10-inch breech-loading rifle. Gordon disappearing carriage. Loading position." Right: "10-inch breech-loading rifle. Gordon disappearing carriage. Firing position." *Century*, February 1895, 579-583.

In 1899, *Harper's* cover-illustrations changed to images that were alternately representative of order and disorder, civilization and chaos. The images oscillated between those who were not ready to govern themselves (feminine/childlike/undisciplined populations) and those who would do the governing for them until they were ready to progress to the height of the Anglo-Saxon male system of social order (masculine/adult/rational populations). A Filipino family dubbed "Our New Citizens," a scene of male chaos (Cubans rioting in Havana) being quelled by masculine forces of order (the Tenth U.S. Cavalry), and an insurgent attack on U.S. troops in Manila provided the foil for the forces of civilization (figs. 4.25-4.27). Against these images of "feminine" men who, by failing to control their lust and failing to provide for the subsequent children, engaging in anarchic insurgencies and uncontrolled rebellions, or meeting cultural definitions of being primitive and uncivilized, fail to meet hegemonic standards for manhood in the U.S. are images of "true manhood." Providing counterpoint to these images of Filipinos and Cubans are the self-restrained resolve and far-sighted intelligence of American patriarchy seen in the portraits of aristocrat-cowboy-turned-soldier Roosevelt and of Admiral Dewey. Their representation promises protection and the return of order (figs. 4.28, 4.29).[81]

[81] In 1900, Harvard took 1,500 Cubans [Cuban men] to its summer school. Sargent performed his

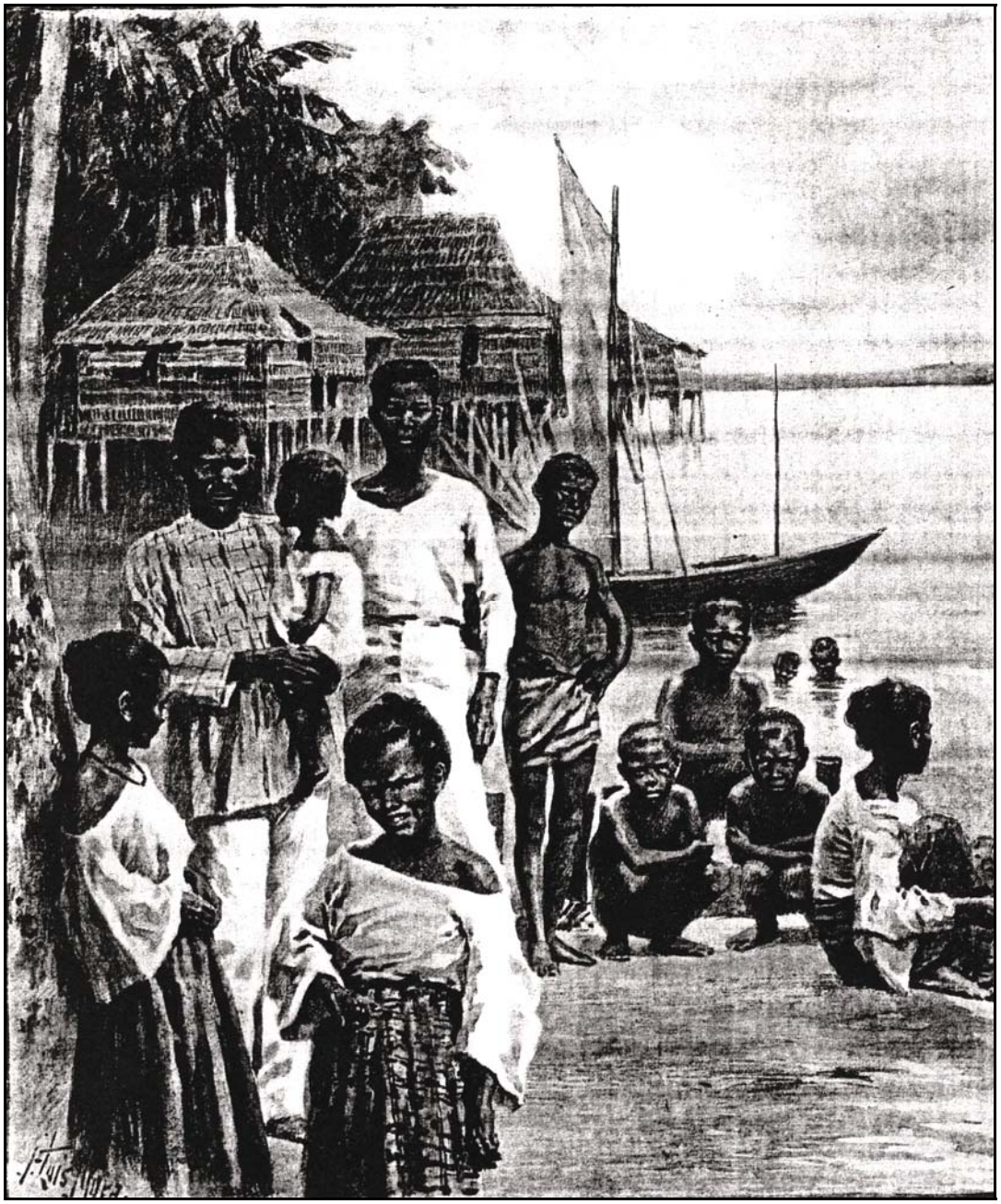

Fig. 4.25. "Our New Citizens—a native family in Iloilo." *Harper's Weekly*, January 14, 1899.

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usual anthropometric research: "We gathered together valuable statistics on the physique of the Cuban race from the measurements that we took of over 1,000 of them." Sargent reports that they were smaller, lighter, and in poorer physical condition than other members of the summer school. Sargent, *Autobiography*, 216, 217.

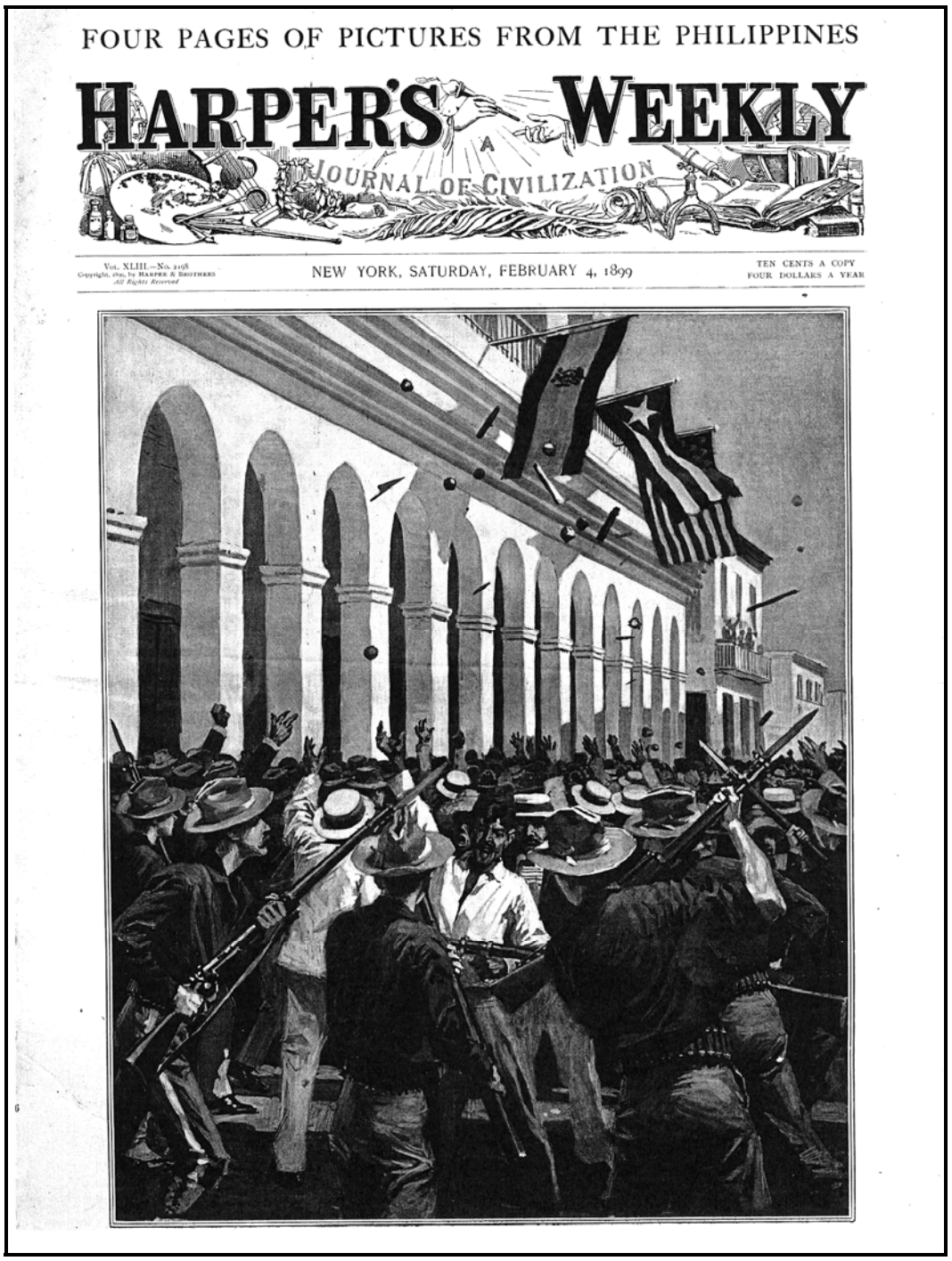

Fig. 4.26. "Havana—10th U.S. Cavalry quelling a tumult aroused by the display of the Spanish flag on a business house." *Harper's Weekly*, February 4, 1899.

Fig. 4.27. "Manila—Insurgent attack on the barracks of Co. C, 13th Minnesota Volunteers, during the Tondo fire." *Harper's Weekly*, April 29, 1899.

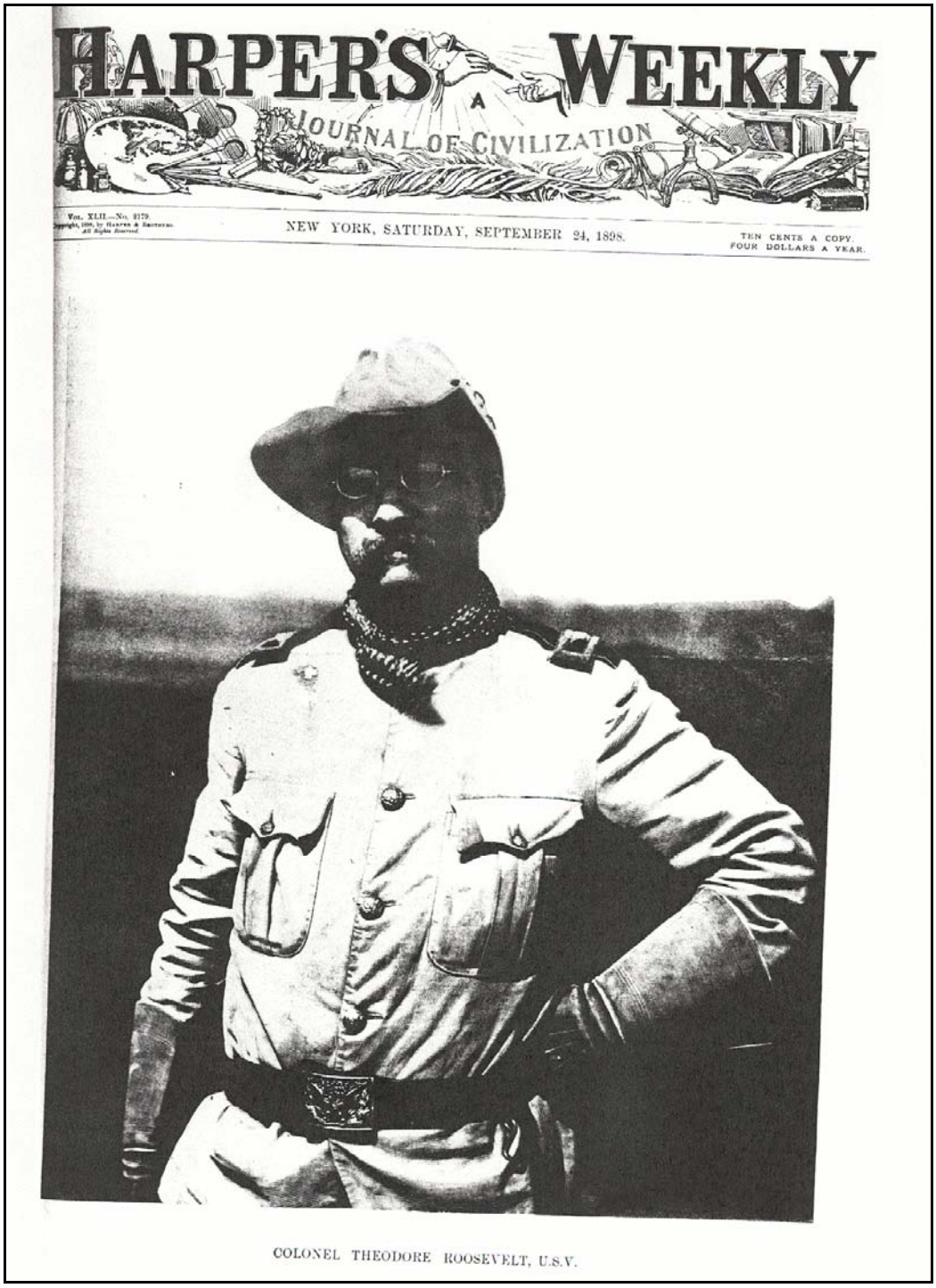

Fig. 4.28. "Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, U.S.V." *Harper's Weekly*, September 24, 1898.

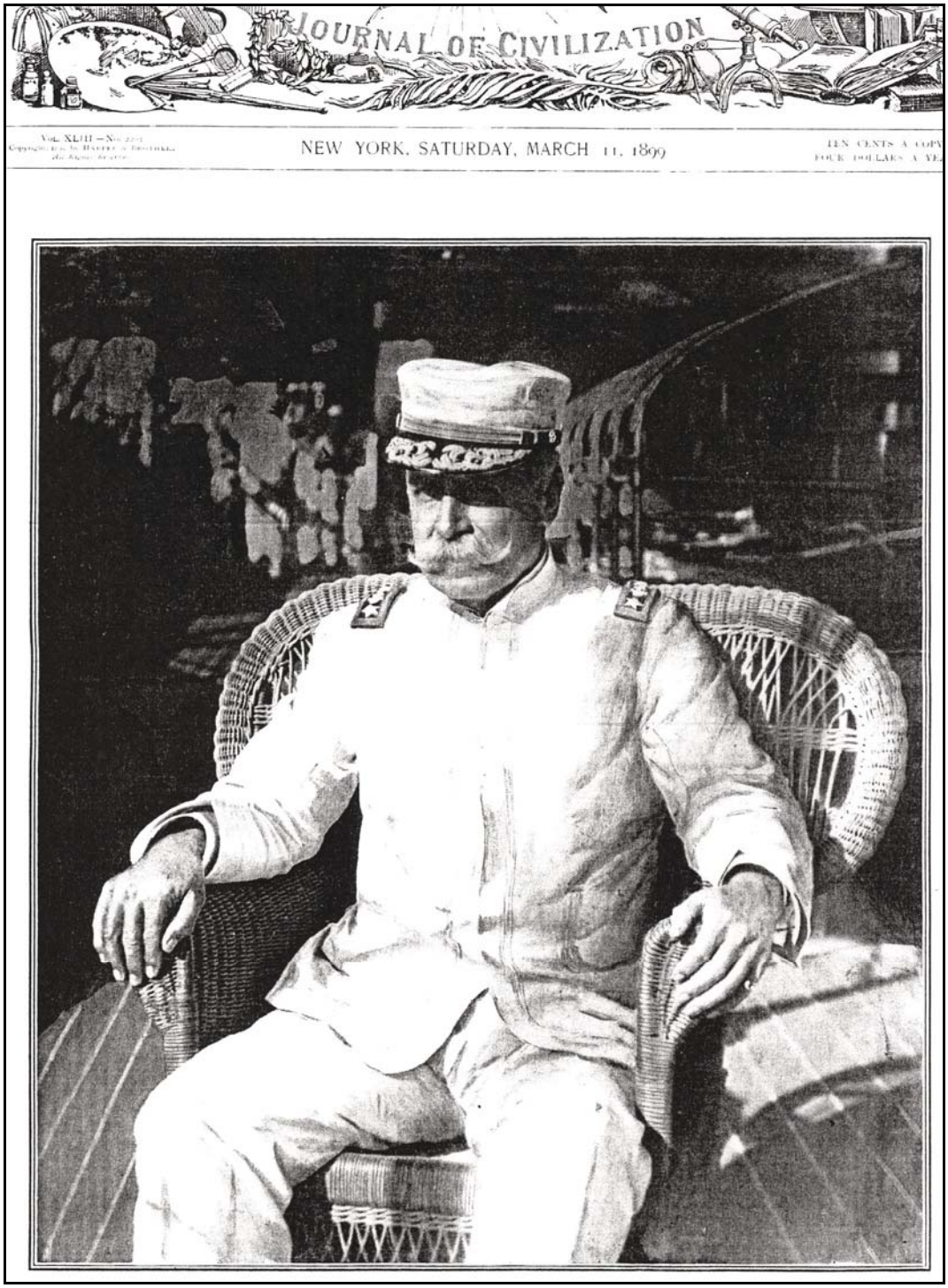

Fig. 4.29. "Admiral George Dewey, U.S.N. From his latest photograph taken on board the flag-ship *Olympia,* Manila." *Harper's Weekly,* March 11, 1899.

Meanwhile, *The National Police Gazette* was still churning out a weekly dosage of strong, defiant, and visually impressive masculinity. It made sure that professional boxing and wrestling kept a high profile, and maintained coverage of strength performers. *The Gazette* was still in at the forefront with respect to male body display. In January 1902, capitalizing on the growing interest among his readers in strength training and on the huge popularity that Sandow was enjoying, Fox instituted something new for his paper: a physical culture contest, a beauty contest of men for men. It may have been the first kind of athletic contest at which one could compete without being present. All a man had to do was to send in his picture and be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Fox announced the contest six months in advance, so that men would have ample time to work on their physiques, and he offered advice about how to have one's photograph taken. If you have well-muscled arms, he suggested, have the photograph taken to show them off. If you have a well-developed torso, the photograph should show you from the waist up. "A **big chest** showing **unusual expansion** makes an **attractive picture**," he confided. "If you have a well-developed chest send your photo and it will receive as much consideration as it deserves. If **your legs and thighs** are well muscled and **proportionately developed** with the

rest of your body send us a full length portrait in an artistic pose."[82] "We **know** this is **going** to be a **Big thing!**" Fox assured his readers a few weeks later.

Ever the democrat, Fox opened the contest to athletes of "all classes" and "of whatever race or occupation." The best part of the contest, the truly provocative aspect that would keep readers in horrible, delicious suspense every week and guarantee new readers, was that Fox promised to run the contestants' pictures in the paper each week "if it is a good one." He was clear about the photographic standard: "we want **photographs** which will be **a credit** to the **artistic tone** of the paper."[83] For those who may have had doubts, Fox was encouraging: "Don't hesitate to send in your **portrait** because **some other fellow's** muscles show up a little better than yours—There may be a **physical defect** in his **makeup** that will not **escape** the observation of **lynx-eyed judges.**"[84] "**No color is barred. No race is shut out."** And remember, Fox said, "**The way to get the Police Gazette regularly is to subscribe**."[85] [Emphasis in the original] True to his word, in the following months, Fox ran full pages, each with several photos, of the contestants. If ever man devised a way to sharpen the edge of a contest for

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[82] *Gazette,* Vol. LXXX, No. 1272, Jan. 4, 1902.
[83] Ibid., January 4, 1902.
[84] Ibid., February 1, 1902.

seeing who(se) is bigger, it was Richard Kyle Fox. Each photograph provided an instantaneous self-comparison or self-contrast for every man who looked at it. Apparently, many men still were racked by anxieties about their strength and physique, their virility and the size of their "organ," their masculinity, because Fox was still receiving pages-worth of advertising for sexual restoratives, remedies for the debilitating effects of "youthful errors or later excesses," and penis-enlargers. Electric belts with "attachment for men," appliances, vacuum developers, moisture-proof athletic supporters, mixtures, capsules, tablets, tonics, tabloids, ointments, and cactus cream were guaranteed to restore natural size, full vigor and feeling to small, shrunken, or weak sexual organs.

Virility—the capacity to dominate, to enforce one's own boundaries, extend one's territory, and avoid being penetrated by others—infuses the rhetoric of boxing, bodybuilding, military power, warfare, and masculinity. Whether the "subject" is athletics, contests, race, assimilation of races, war, military preparedness, heterosexuality, class, the Monroe Doctrine, the Venezuelan "crisis," the Roosevelt Corollary, territorial expansion, new markets, colonialism, the "granting" of rights, foreign policy, international relations, the subject is always gender. The tension centers on discerning the point of

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[85] Ibid., May 24, 1902.

difference between stronger and weaker, richer and poorer, bigger and smaller, healthier or sicker, being educated or being uneducated, keeping others out or letting them in, setting the terms for the discussion or hoping to be allowed to have a voice, self-governing or being governed by others, controlling one's own boundaries or being vulnerable to violation, penetrating or being subject to penetration, masculine or feminine. It is about gender distinctions, politics, and power. One of the most efficient and permanent tools for teaching a culture about power positions and expectations is the metaphor, particularly when it is presented and consumed as a visual image. It works with no effort on the viewer's part, and the unconscious is its greatest ally. Many images promise reward and fulfillment, even a new identity, if only the viewer cooperates with the behavioral expectations that are matched with her or his body type, which includes sex, color, size, conformity to cultural standards of beauty, wellness, wholeness, age, and ability. The icon of the muscular white male body, implicitly heterosexual, claims a place of cultural privilege.

Gender is recognized now by a wide range of disciplines and scholars as fundamentally constitutive of social relations, and therefore of history. A rich literature now exists that addresses the representation of the male and the significance of such representations for cultural stasis and change. Susan Jeffords and Lynda Boose have detailed the seizure of hypermasculine symbolics

in the popular media as a process of attempting to gain or regain preeminence in the culture. Boose studies the films of the 1980s that were defined by the "techno-muscularity," which was "focused on a male body image that signifies not heterosexual virility but potency over other male contenders." The men in these films were muscular for their validation by other men, much as George Windship had made himself for his Harvard classmates in the 1850s.[86] Jeffords' argues that popular media, particularly film, used images of a revisionist U.S. war in Vietnam and the emotions that those images can evoke in an effort at the recuperation of masculinity in the United States. Many scholars of the cultural history of art and of film, and others who study the gender/political effects of advertising, have recognized that images in those arenas, as David Lubin says, are "public enunciators of gender difference, treating gender as an essentially static and reified thing rather than as a forever tentative state of mind."[87] As such, their images inculcate idealized ways of appearing and behaving that promise social power if one adheres to their careful and impossible prescriptions.

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[86] See Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Lynda Boose, "Techno-Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal'," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. See also John Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* and J. A. Mangan, *Shaping the Superman* and *Superman Supreme*.

[87] David Lubin, "*Trompe l'oeil* and American Masculinity," masculinities 2, no. 4 (Winter 1994), 41. See also Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Male Trouble" in *Constructing Masculinity*; Alex Potts, "Beautiful Bodies and Dying Heroes: Images of Ideal Manhood in the French Revolution" *History Workshop* 30, Autumn 1990, 1-21; Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, (New Haven and London: Yale, 1994). See also Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body,"

The identification between the military and masculinity has received much attention as well, as have the mutually constitutive images and functions of sports and masculinity. The power of masculine identity as a component of political symbolism and motivation, or what Lynn Hunt calls the "poetics of power" and the power of symbolic form to organize popular consciousness and direct political action, is another area of study. Joshua S. Goldstein elucidates how "constructions of masculinity motivate soldiers to fight," recognizing that masculinity construction "contributes to men's exclusive status as warriors, and preparation for war is frequently a central component of masculinity."[88] Goldstein argues that war is a cause of gender, that "the war system [all the interrelated ways in which societies organize themselves to engage in potential lethal intergroup violence] influences the socialization of children into *all* their gender roles."[89] In other words, learning to be prepared for war—to function in a situation of contested dominance and violence—is the most fundamental role that hegemonic masculinity prescribes for boys.

Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine*; Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, esp. Ch. 3, "The Imagery of Radicalism," 87-119.

[88] Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See also William Arkin and Lynne R. Dobrofsky, "Military Socialization and Masculinity," *Journal of Social Issues* 34, no. 1 (1978): 151-168; Donald J. Mrozek, "The habit of victory: the American military and the cult of manliness,' *Manliness and Morality*; Mark E. Kann, "On the Man Question: Gender and Civic Virtue in America (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Paul R. Higate, *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003).

[89] Goldstein, 3, 410-11.

The metaphor of the powerful white male had an incalculably powerful salience in the nineteenth century (fig. 4.30). It permeated every level of culture, every kind of cultural production, and so it formed the constant element in the construction of the dominant understanding of how the universe "works," of reality itself. All other manifestations of human life were the variables, formed at some other, less evolved point of evolution. Through the representation of sports contests, powerful male bodies, men in military uniform, and guns and warships, the illustrated periodical press played the leading role in the coalescence of a masculinist culture that found its next logical expression in the international arena. Being a contender among world powers had registered deeply in the psyches of those who made legislative and executive decisions in the United States government, controlled the press, formed the world of athletics, professed history, science, medicine, and philosophy, enforced law, and made war. It had registered also among the millions who had no such lofty roles in the culture, who perhaps aspired to those roles, or who could not even do that, because their bodies could never, no matter how much weight they lifted, how skilled at sports they became, how muscular and symmetrical and perfect they

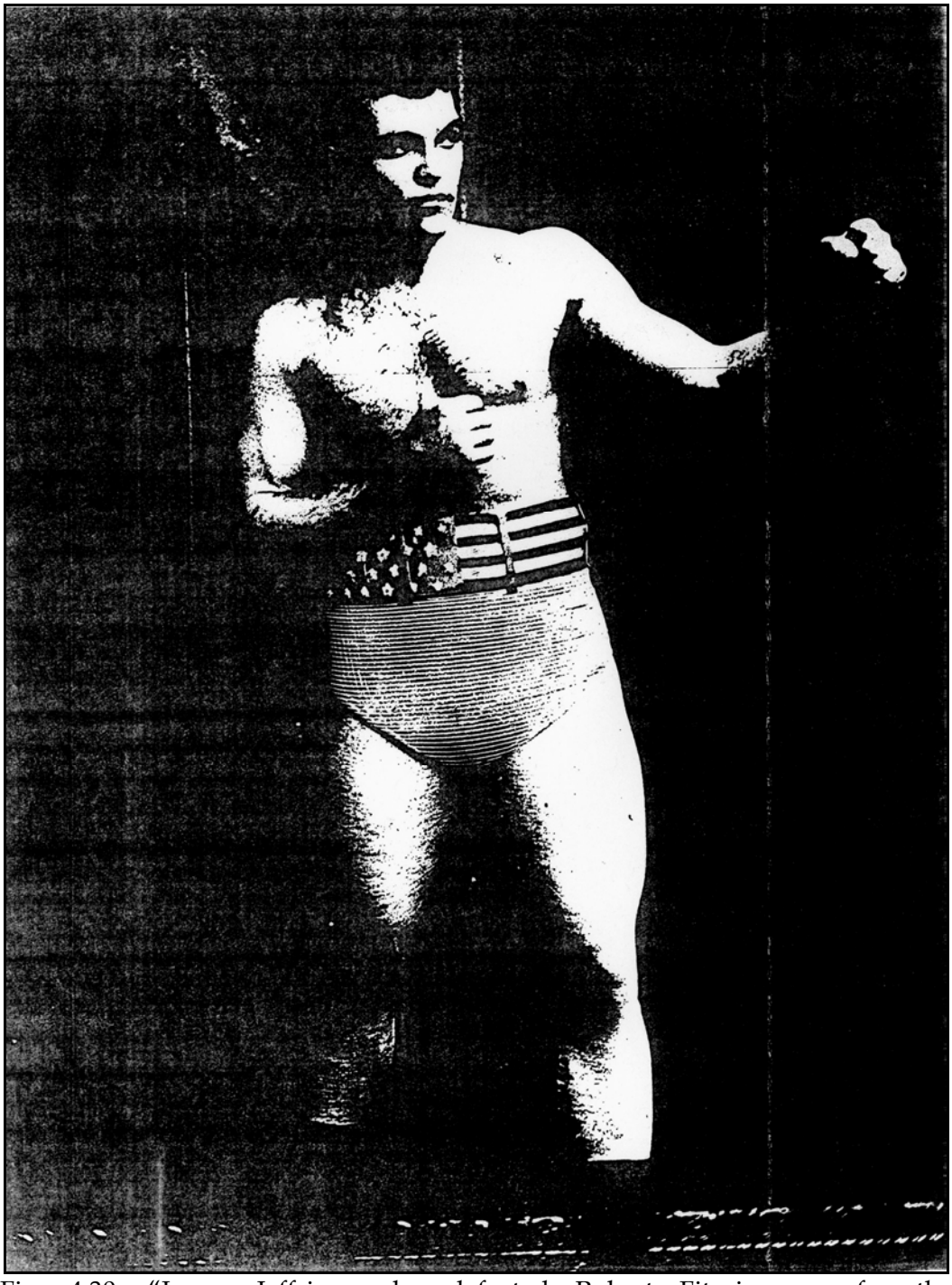

Fig. 4.30. "James Jeffries, who defeated Robert Fitzsimmons for the championship of the world." Jeffries's belt is fashioned after the U.S. flag. *National Police Gazette*, December 7, 1901, Supplement.

were, be white male bodies. The majority of the populace whose perceptions dominated U.S. culture had introjected the metaphor of the powerful white male. That psychological process had immediate effects on every aspect of life, but its most powerful, extensive, and dangerous effects were on international relations and foreign policy. The metaphor has long-term effects as well, so long-term that the mind cannot project far enough into the future to imagine them. The ubiquity of the icon of the powerful white male in the nineteenth century contributed to a constantly expanding dynamic of competition and dominance that, whenever it reached a point of resolution did so only temporarily and then started over again. This dissertation has examined images of human beings and some of the cultural context in which the images were produced in order to understand some of the visual tools by which ideologies of gender—politics of dominance and subordinance—were transmitted and insinuated into the cultural order. Those images, however, have not vanished. Given the protean nature of hegemony, like all things historically produced, the images have changed (but only slightly) but social and political positioning determined by body-appearance have not. In fact, we in the twenty-first century are probably more impressed with athleticism and physical conditioning than those who lived at the end of the nineteenth. Our mass media is still reproducing images of dichotomous gender roles as both norm and imperative, and we, too, live in a

world in which power is wielded and witnessed in terms of gender hierarchies: male and female, both between men and women and within the category of "men," which is further ordered by levels of masculinity: hegemonic, subordinate, complicitous, and marginal.[90] We in the twenty-first century are living with the effects of the metaphor of the muscular Anglo-Saxon male and in many of our mental constructions, rationalizations, defenses, decisions, actions, behaviors, and policies with respect to international politics, are still living by it. Perhaps if we can learn to recognize it, to remember whose interests it serves and how it strives to situate all human beings so that its own interests are served, to understand how it functions as well as its place in structures of identity and culture, then we can begin the process of divesting it of its magical power.

[90] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 76-81.

Epilogue

This study has been confined to specific types of visual imagery that permeated the popular illustrated press in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After the Civil War, the phenomena of an industrialized infrastructure that had been mobilized in the waging of the war, the emancipation of African American people from slavery, the pressure on the federal government to extend voting rights to African American men and to all adult women, and massive emigration from Europe, especially from eastern and southern Europe, created the conditions for revamped images of gender definitions, race, and ethnicity. Moreover, the well-publicized renewal of European colonialism in Africa and Asia, the sense of admiration, competitiveness and fear that this created in the U.S., and the specter of European powers on a constant push to develop new and stronger military machinery that would enable them to escalate their wars with each other haunted the mainstream imagination. Emancipation at home and accelerated colonialism abroad were time perfectly for the popularization of evolutionary theory and its misapplication to social, political, and religious explanations for the contemporary social order led to the dispersal in the popular press of interpretations of women and men, race and ethnicity, that were strictly delineated by difference and hierarchy, and justified by "scientific fact." These various elements of the postbellum culture created precisely the right conditions for the emergence of discourses of gender and race that could be transmitted, argued, and learned by means of the reproduction of endless images of human bodies that would be

distributed by the illustrated periodical press. This was also exactly the right moment for the evolution of the physical culture movement and the antebellum faith in the possibility of human perfection into a keen and all-embracing popular reception of competitive sports for men and for the natural and incontrovertible superiority of the white male body over all others. As the belief in physical culture as the avenue to the continuation of white male supremacy in the United States grew, athletics gained credence and became incorporated into the dominant definition of "manliness," which found its highest expression in the white (increasingly cast as "Anglo-Saxon-Nordic-Teutonic") elite male. Athletics became an integral part of university life, and before long, the unification of the "Anglo-Saxon race," the manly male (to be called "masculine male"), and the capacity for national and world leadership found ubiquitous and convincing expression in the image of the athletic, warrior body.

This transition from intangible qualities of manliness to visual and embodied signs of masculinity was so successful because it was effected by illustrations that linked a specific image to its dominant position in the culture. This image—the elitist white male—served also as the metaphor national strength and order, expansionism, and a credible presence in the world of international politics. This image taught the populace how strong and invincible the white male body could be, in rebuttal to anxieties that somehow (paradoxically given its supposed racial superiority), the white male body was in an irreversible decline. The representation of white men as physically, as well as mentally and morally, superior was instrumental in convincing the mass audience of the periodical press that expansionism overseas, governance of less "evolved" populations

both within the United States and overseas, and the competition for a place among the best navies was in simply part of the natural course of events.

Visual metaphors for national expansion and dominance, and for physical power as a tool of relationship with other industrialized nations appeared also in the form of women, African American men, Native American men, and the populations of China, Cuba, the Philippines, Africa, South America, and India. The representations of the bodies of those human beings, with few exceptions, functioned as further proof of white male superiority, because they illustrated the abjectness, the weakness, delicacy, primitiveness, femininity, disorder, savagery, what have you, of those who were not white and male. By the turn of the century, the muscular white male encompassed discourses of race, men's natural dominance over women, nationalism, commercial and military expansionism, and an incipient eugenics movement.

The means by which a culture learns, justifies, and reproduces its truths and political orders, especially to the extent that they become an unexamined given from which a culture operates are important to recognize and understand. Current analyses of foreign policy, international relations, and most importantly, how the structures and disciplines that constitute political science and international relations are themselves formed by a masculinist agenda (and therefore assume what they purport to study) focus on the gender definitions and hierarchies at the foundation of global politics. The study of masculinist paradigms of semiotics, symbols, and metaphors is being used now in feminist analyses of nationalism and global relations. These studies take such forms as the dismantling of Cartesian-based philosophies, elucidating the influence of women's

experiences on nationalist movements and the ways in which gender is foundational to global economics, and unpacking the myriad of ways in which international relations shape hegemonic demands for the exhibition of masculinity when doing political business with other nations. These kinds of investigations offer a wealth of new perspectives and ways of thinking about economic reality, social settings, and national and international politics—the worlds we all live in. A growing body of scholarly work criticizes academic, institutional, and professional practices themselves as being fundamentally flawed, circular, self-perpetuating and unenlightening because they incorporate philosophical assumptions, personal and national worldviews, values, perceptions, and emotional needs and compulsions that are constitutive of hegemonic masculinity. At the end of the nineteenth century, the visual metaphor of the athletic Anglo-Saxon male strengthened a cultural "given" and eased the way for imperialistic policies of governance, military control, and commercial advantage that continue to determine relations between world leaders and to affect profoundly the fates of the peoples whose lives they touch. For this reason, our welfare and survival may well depend on achieving and maintaining as clear and inclusive an understanding of our culture's organizing images and metaphors as we possibly can.

Appendix

Circulation figures for 1882-1900

Year	*Harper's Weekly*	*National Police*	*Scribner's/ The Century*	*Scribner's Magazine*
1882	120,000	No figures	132,857	N/A
1885	120,000	125,000	213,333	N/A
1887	100,000	125,000	222,031	Est. 1887
1888	100,000	100,000	214,100	No figure
1889	100,000	150,000	209,833	80,000
1892	85,000	150,000	198,300	133,016
1895	85,000	150,000	175,000	133,350
1897	80,000	130,000	160,000	75,000 [sic]
1900	80,000	130,000	150,000	175,000

Circulation figures as reported in *N.W. Ayer and Sons' American Newspaper Annual*, established 1882. Volumes for 1882-1900. (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Sons, 1882).

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VITA

Alice Marie Shukalo was born in Newton, New Jersey, on February 28, 1952, to Anita Marie Skinner Shukalo and Francis John Shukalo. She graduated from High Point Regional High School, Sussex, New Jersey, in 1970 and from Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. During the following years she was employed as an admissions counselor at a graduate school in professional psychology and as an associate editor at a legal handbook publisher. In 1980 she entered the College of Communication at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas, where she completed the coursework for a Master of Arts in Journalism. From 1981 until 1987 she worked as a professional journalist in Austin. In August 1988 she entered the Graduate School of the University of Texas in the Department of American Studies. She taught in the Departments of English at the University of Texas at Austin, at Southwestern University, and at St. Edward's University, and in the Department of American Studies at the University of Texas. She worked also as a consultant for the Undergraduate Writing Center at the University of Texas. She has worked for six years in performance assessment for college readiness and teacher certification.

Permanent Address: 911 Blanco St., Austin, Texas 78703

This dissertation was typed by the author.